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the journal of creative geography



THE BORDERLANDS ISSUE

Exploring borders in the land, real, imagined and remembered

{ POETRY, FICTION & CREATIVE NON-FICTION }

2009

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2009



Weaver Mountains from Canyon de Chelly: A Geographic Impossibility,
JAY DUSARD, black and white photograph.

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Opposite page (photograph by Jay Dusard):

"Even on the clearest of days you can't see the Weavers from de Chelly. They are about 230 miles apart, as the condor flies. Astronauts can see them both at the same time, but the angle of view is radically different. This geographic impossibility was created in the darkroom using two negatives, two enlargers, careful registration, and precision bleaching in the narrow 'blend zone' between the component images."

This was published in the Spring issue of *Living Cowboy Ethics: The Journal of the Paragon Foundation*.

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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE	6	
POETRY		
Clinton J. Frakes	9	<i>Colorado River Poem</i>
Suzanne Roberts	38	<i>Devotion</i>
Jenny Gubernick	44	<i>White Girl in the Borderlands</i>
FICTION		
B. R. Bonner	14	<i>The Lagerstätten</i>
Katheryn Krotzer Laborde	26	<i>I Drive</i>
CREATIVE NON-FICTION		
Larry Lindahl	28	<i>Hopi Corn: Gift of the Rain</i>
Jeremy Frey	40	<i>Letter to Paul</i>
Amna I. Ahmad	46	<i>Claiming Desiland</i>
Kathryn M. Lucchese	56	<i>The Shores of Sendai-Wan</i>
Majed Akhter	66	<i>Geography of Romance</i>
ART		
Ben Kirkby	10	<i>Colorado River Series</i>
Ellen McMahon	25	<i>Mexico Shell</i>
Ben Kirkby	34	<i>Roberta Blackgoat Series</i>
Sarah Zidonik	42	<i>Jump Rope Bubbles</i>
Sarah Zidonik	54	<i>Bright and Beautiful</i>
Sarah Zidonik	55	<i>I Wrapped Him Up Tight</i>
Ellen McMahon	69	<i>Leaves</i>
Rafael Routson		<i>Plant/Sketches</i>
BIOGRAPHIES	71	

EDITOR'S NOTE

As editors, we each step into the embrace and challenge of this journal, *you are here*, to stay true to the original intentions and to instill our own inspirations into its metamorphosis. *you are here* is an annual publication produced through the School of Geography and Development at the University of Arizona that focuses on perceptions of place and ideas about how place is interpreted, experienced, and created. I elicited writings and art for the 2009 issue to explore the theme of "borderlands," to weave a physical, emotional, and psychological portrait of borderlands in the Southwest and around the globe.

I posed these questions: How do you experience the effects of borderlands in your day-to-day life? What does it mean to cross borders, spatially, temporally, physically, mentally, and spiritually? How do we hold ourselves accountable to the choices, grand and small, that facilitate borders and the crossing of borders? I invited artists and authors to explore their own ideas and to ask their own questions.

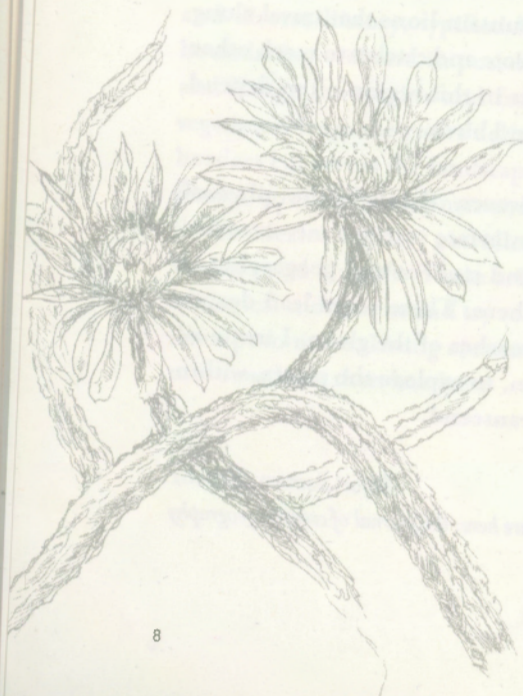
These borderlands, here, in southern Arizona have a complex and diverse history, typified by conflict. We live in a region of boundaries, real and imposed. The rising elevation of the Basin and Range mountains and frost lines and the reach of riparian vegetation from the rivers delineate natural boundaries. Artificial borders cut across the landscape as political boundaries, property fences, housing developments, highways and roads, and the United States-Mexico border, patrolled by hundreds if not thousands of vehicles and aircraft. These arbitrary lines cut across the flow of biological movement and try to stop, redirect and control all who attempt to move. Living creatures need to move, though, a desire more resilient than borders.

I lived for a summer on the San Pedro River, a migratory corridor between the tropics of Mexico and Central America and the higher latitudes of the United States and Canada. Over five hundred species of birds travel through the river vegetation on spring or fall migration routes. Animals and insects also use the corridor of water and vegetation, including the nectar-feeding Lesser Long-nosed bats and several species of butterflies. The San Pedro River and the neighboring Santa Cruz River run as the critical flyways for hundreds of these migratory species. Long, parallel mountain ranges rise on either side and follow the course of the river north. These mountain ranges, many of which rise into spruce and fir, function as another flyway for higher elevation hummingbirds that fly from canyon to canyon feeding on flowers. Mountains also harbor populations of bobcats, foxes, and mountain lions, and the occasional traveling jaguar. To the west, the Whetstone and Huachuca ranges ascend from the creosote flats, and to the east the Dragoons and the Mules; farther east the Swisshelms, Chiricahuas, and Peloncillos. These ranges, though tall, are relatively small in area, isolated from each other by stretches of grasslands or desert. To maintain healthy, viable populations, many species need to migrate between ranges, like the mountain lions that travel along drainages and across the hills of creosote and catclaw to reach other mountain populations. Plant species in this region often depend on the migrating animals, insects, and birds.

This network of relationships, woven through the physical landscape and the tangled human interface intrigue me, as reality and as metaphor, as an ecologist and student and geographer. I write this to ground myself: I am here. These pages lead deeper into the Southwest and to the far reaches of the globe. I invite all to read and listen and pay attention, to explore the places, within and without, that we inhabit and transcend.

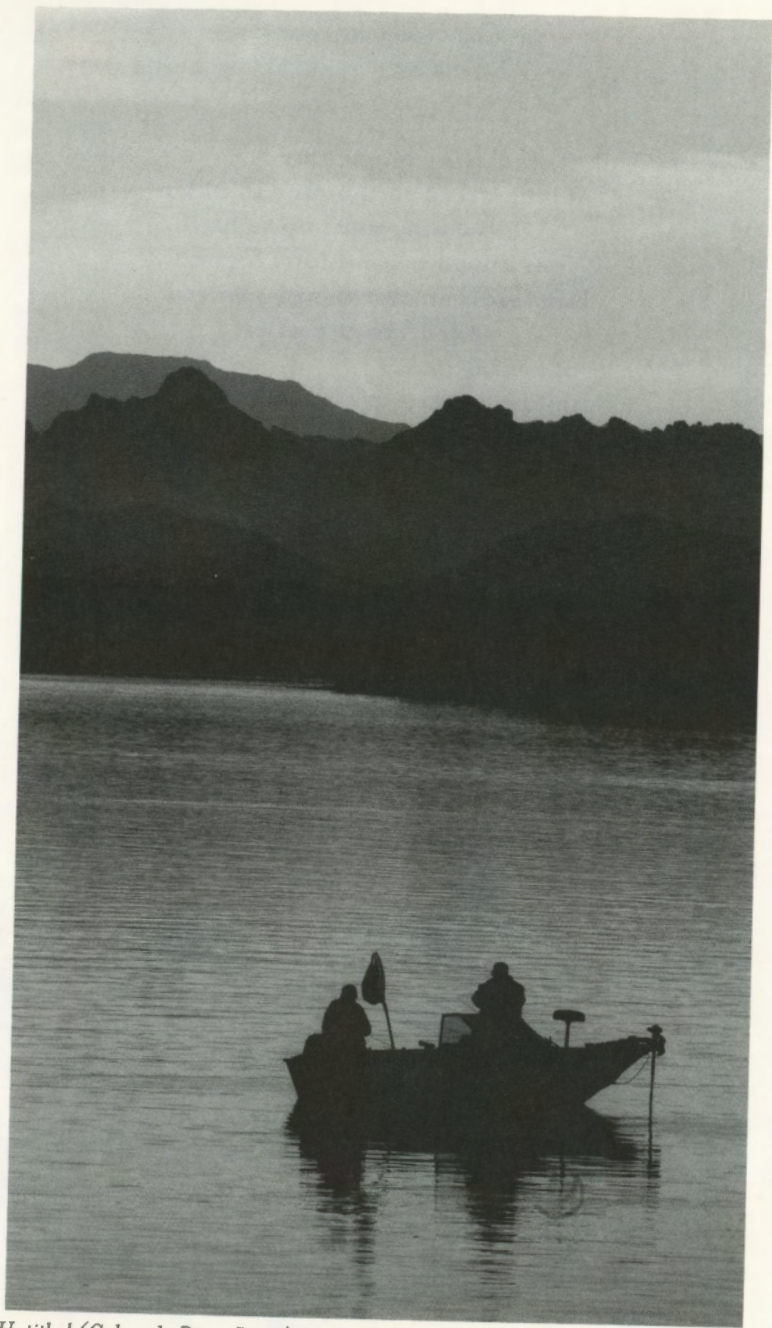
Rafael Routson, Editor

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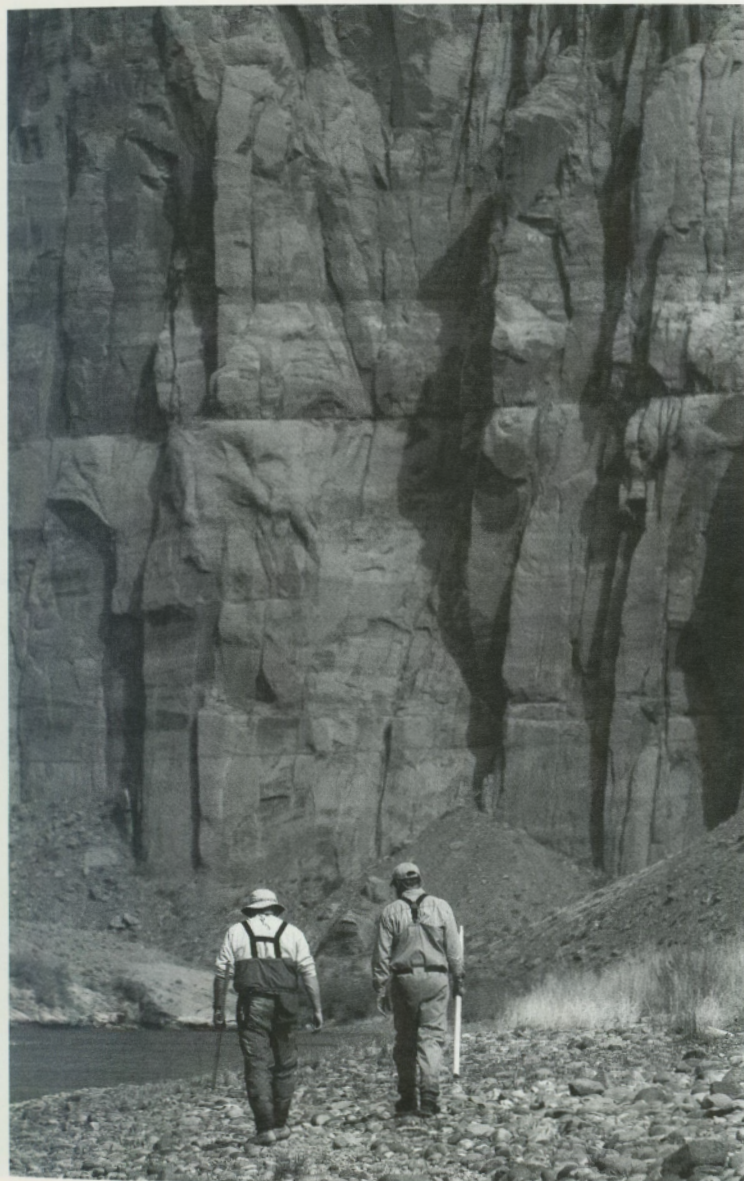


Colorado River Poem
(CLINTON J. FRAKES)

Unbroken flexing momentum
of blue-green earthbound thunder
bursting white upon itself :
collisions caught in sandstone & gneiss,
long-grooven cosmogonies lodged
in sedgebank parties
of wading heron :
manifold rim-thrusted tributaries
banging deathly pure
seeking flattest reach,
riffing under pagoda buttes,
sluiced at each thirsty town :
sometimes a thick ferrous swath
atop bare schist,
tangled in tamarisk :
at other bends a knuckly palisade
at the placid gray murk under
elephant-faced cliffs :
the labyrinths of Flaming Gorge, Yampa
& Desolation
as one-armed Powell saw it
in crazed insistence,
touched to his marrow
by Permian time :
finally spread irretrievably thin
as a neutral sheet
of fleshless spent silver :
a sip wedged at the basin
of planetary conclusion--
the drying muck of
alluvial Yuma plain.



Untitled (Colorado River Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph, 2008.



Untitled (Colorado River Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph, 2008.



Untitled (Colorado River Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph, 2008.



The Lagerstätten
(B. R. BONNER)



I.

One day in January—January 12th to be exact—we found ourselves standing on a pass between two snow-capped peaks at 4,700 meters altitude, gasping for breath and struggling against the pounding headaches produced by the lack of oxygen. My brother Roberto reminded me that it was my turn to fill the canteens, so I started down the rocky slope, heading straight for the small streams that branched off the meandering glacier of cracked blue ice in the valley below us. I descended into a narrow swath of shadow, switch-backing my way toward the glacier's edge; and there, on that barren, Cordilleran slope, I found the layer of rock that we later christened the Cavazos Formation. Scanning the terrain, I thought my mind was playing tricks on me. The altitude perhaps—I knew that climbers in the Andes occasionally suffered delusions induced by hypoxia. But the strange forms I saw in the rocks were solid and immovable. All around me, stamped into the millions of rock shards sloughed off the outcrops by the extremes of heat and cold, lay frozen impressions of Cretaceous-aged fauna, some of them displaying attributes of both plant and animal, as if Nature, through that sudden and sporadic change process known by the evolutionary biologists as Punctuated Equilibrium, had given birth to a hybrid of the taxonomic kingdoms. I picked up a flat piece of shale that hosted an ammonite whose spiral shape had evolved from a tight coil into that of a perfect figure nine, and held it up

in the air with both hands. "Get down here," I yelled to Roberto and his student Elena. "Both of you. Come take a look at this."

Within the span of an hour we found hundreds of aquatic animal species scattered amongst the incline, embedded in the wine-colored shale—a graveyard that no paleontological textbook or monograph had ever described—replete with evolutionary dead-ends whose lineages had been doomed to a cruel obscurity. As we scoured the slope, picking over the talus for more fossils, we paused to listen to each other's shouted descriptions of an undiscovered species or, in the rare case, the potential for a new branch in the tree of life. I remember the smiles on our faces as we scurried along the slope, finding fossil after fossil—none of them familiar—outlines of one hundred and forty million-year-old animals so perfectly preserved you could see their cilia, their tiny octopus-like tentacles, their spiny teeth—even the outlines of their feathery, soft-bodied forms. We also found fossil casts of enormous shark teeth, dark gray in color, with sharp, serrated ridges along the edges. They were monstrous things, the size of a large man's hand, remnants of a cavernous jaw.

The sun soon dipped below the pass, enveloping the windy cirque valley in cold shadows, in alpine harshness. We made camp on a level spot by the glacier. After feeding the horses, Elena made a frugal dinner of dried beef and hot soup, which we ate while discussing the various samples that we had collected. Roberto heated a pot of glacial ice to make the *mate* tea. He poured a gourdful, added a spoonful of sugar, and passed it to Elena, who sucked the hot green broth from the metal straw and warmed her hands on the gourd before passing it to me. We sat in a circle around the small cook-stove, cleaning and studying the fossils and remarking on the unusual aspects of their morphology. Elena kept laughing and grinning and talking excitedly. She was an attractive woman, in spite of the dirt that had accumulated on her over the last several weeks, regardless of her bruises and scratches and disheveled, wavy hair.

Roberto rubbed his hands over the stove. "There's a word for finds like this," he said. "They call them Lagerstätten. They are so rare that only a handful have ever been found: one formation in British Columbia called the Burgess Shale. Another few in the United States. One in Germany called the Solnhofen, where they found the first bird, *Archaeopteryx*."

"I don't recall that term," I replied. "But I recognize the names of those formations."

"Lagerstätten means 'lode places' in German. Think of them as paleontological Mother Lodes—a rich and diverse class of fossil beds with spectacular preservation. Some of our most invaluable insights into natural history have come from these rocks."

"I've read that some of the fossils that come out of those beds are worth tens of thousands of dollars," Elena reflected. "Are you saying we've found something comparable?"

"Yes. That's exactly what I'm saying."

Each of us quietly pondered the implications of this and considered the task ahead of us; namely, we had to carry the fossils out, safely, and maintain strict confidence of the location of our discovery long enough for us to return and extract from the area the most precious and valuable specimens we could find.

We had wandered into this area by accident, and were still unsure of our exact location. Our handheld GPS had fallen onto some rocks only two days into our expedition and, as we could never get it to function again, we navigated solely by means of compass and map, knowing that the available maps of the region were considered untrustworthy. We fretted over the possibility that we might never successfully backtrack to this remote region that, for all we knew, had never been previously explored by geologists.

Elena took out one of the map quadrants we had come to rely on and found an outline of a glacier in a narrow valley. After studying the map a few moments, she declared: "We came down this pass here—but the border doesn't follow the ridgeline as one might expect. Instead it zigzags on either side of it in several places, dipping into this valley and showing most of this glacier on the Argentine side of the line."

Roberto took the map, studied it, and ultimately agreed with her assessment. The border between Argentina and Chile snaked widely on both sides of the ridge and was marked with a dotted line, indicated in the map legend as a contested boundary. "I don't trust this map," he remarked, scanning the peaks with a frown, "but it does seem likely that we're in disputed territory here."

Later that evening we exchanged ideas on the reasons for the unusual quality of the fossil preservation. "If your company hadn't snubbed us when it came time to fund this work," Roberto said, "you'd have been considered an equal partner. As it is, the university will expect Elena and I to do the paperwork."

It was a rather insipid attack, and had less to do with the whims of an older brother than with his underlying need to assert his dominance and authority over the direction of our investigation. He felt threatened by my contributions—why I don't know. To make matters worse, I overheard Roberto later that night as he slipped out of our tent and into Elena's, ostensibly to discuss a technical issue. I lay awake for hours that night, as did they, and listened to them laugh with the untethered abandon that accompanies the realization of good fortune. They were giddy with excitement, acting like children who spitefully ignore their friends. Well. It didn't matter that my company had refused to fund this expedition. Why should it? After all, it's interest lay in minerals, not fossils.



II.

We spent the next five days on the slopes of the glacial valley. Roberto and Elena made detailed descriptions of the fossils, took hundreds of photographs, plotted spatial distributions, and made preliminary taxonomic categorizations. I mapped the lateral extent of the source formation and began a detailed biostratigraphic zoning of the rock column. But I soon grew bored with this tedious work, and wandered off by myself into an adjoining valley where I found an outcrop streaked with small veins of what appeared to be silver. I took several samples for lab analysis, and when I returned to camp Roberto and Elena asked me if I had found any fossils in the adjoining valley. I told them no, that there was nothing there that would interest them.

One late afternoon, as we sat huddled around our cook stove drinking *mate*, we saw a small figure standing on the horizon on a crag of rock, looking down into the valley.

"Who do you suppose that is?" Roberto asked.

The tiny figure continued to watch us.

Elena fetched the binoculars and focused on the mysterious speck. "It's a gendarme," she said. "A border guard."

"How do you know that? You can't possibly tell that from here, even with binoculars."

"Yes," she said. "I recognize the color of his uniform."

"Is it one of ours?"

"No. He's Chilean. He's heading this way.

"Cover the samples," Roberto said.

"No. That's not a good idea," Elena warned. "Better not make any hasty movements. He's been watching us with binoculars too. He'd immediately become suspicious if we started covering up things. Just sit still."

Twenty minutes later a man dressed in fatigues, carrying a heavy pack and a semi-automatic rifle, strode up into camp. He was young, no more than twenty-five. He smiled and waved at us as he approached, as if to allay the suspicion that he saw frozen on our dirty, savage-looking faces.

"Buenas tardes," he said, smiling. He took off his cap and wiped his brow. He looked tired.

"Buenas tardes," Roberto replied, nodding and standing up. He introduced us by name and explained that we were researchers on a geological expedition from the University of Buenos Aires.

The young man frowned slightly when he heard this. "What kind of geological expedition? he asked.

"We're looking for fossils," Elena said.

The young man slid off his pack and sat down on a rock. He kept his semi-automatic cradled snugly in his arms, but gave every appearance of congeniality. "You aren't doing any mineral exploration, are you?" he asked in a serious tone.

"No, no," I said. "There aren't any minerals in these rocks."

Elena offered the gendarme a gourd of *mate*, which he accepted graciously. He took the gourd with two hands and smiled, revealing a gold front tooth. "Do you have permission to be here?" he asked.

"How do you mean?" Roberto returned. "We're on Argentine soil."

The young man frowned again. "No," he said. "I'm afraid not. This entire valley resides in Chile."

"Our maps say differently," Roberto said, his voice registering an obvious irritation and impatience.

The young man tactfully changed the subject. "This is good *mate*," he said, smiling. "It's been days since I've had one. Would you have any food that you could spare? I'm heading back to San Jorge tomorrow and am running a little low."

"Yes," Elena said. "I'll get you some. How much do you need?"

"Oh, no more than three day's worth. If you could spare me that much, I'd be very grateful." The gendarme's voice now

rang with a false politeness. It dawned on me that he might take the food whether we gave it willingly or not. I cut my eyes in Elena's direction, and saw, from the periphery of my vision, how frightened she looked.

"You know," the gendarme said. "They don't pay us much for this job. It's hard getting by, if you know what I mean." He was looking at Roberto as he said this, his gold-toothed smile gleaming in the harsh sunlight.

"Sure," Roberto said. He got up and disappeared into their tent to fetch his wallet.

"You know," the young man continued, now turning to me. "I haven't seen my wife in three months. It gets pretty lonely up here."

When I looked at him I saw that his smile had turned ugly and diabolic. He adjusted his semi-automatic, and continued to sip his gourd of tea. I looked around me for some sort of weapon, but finding none, mentally prepared myself to jump him if he made any threatening or hostile moves.

The gendarme spat once, then wandered over to one of the piles of samples and poked at it with the muzzle of his rifle. "*Carajo*," he muttered, bending down to examine one of the enormous shark teeth. "I've never seen anything like this. Where did you find them?"

Elena appeared. She handed him a sack of rations. "We found them by a river about five kilometers east of here," she said, intimating that we'd found them on Argentine soil.

The gendarme gave an unbelieving smirk. He muttered something to himself and continued his prodding with the barrel of his semi-automatic.

Roberto returned and shook hands with the man, placing a wad of pesos in his hand. "Maybe this will help you out," he said, sarcastically.

"*Gracias*," the young man said, displaying his gold tooth. He kept looking down at the pile of shark teeth. "Could I have one of those?" he asked, pointing with the barrel of his gun.

"I'm afraid not," Roberto said. "Research, you know. If you like I can draw you a map of the place where you can find some more."

"But I thought you said you found these five kilometers east of here."

Roberto looked at me in surprise. He had been in the tent when Elena had made her comment, and now he realized that his own attempt to deflect the gendarme's suspicions had conflicted with

an earlier fabrication. "Of course," he said. "You can't very well go tramping around on the Argentine side."

"The snows will be coming any day now," the young man said, turning his gaze to the peaks. "I don't mind if you stay in this valley until then. But I wouldn't come back if I were you. It looks dangerous here. You can see there's been a number of recent rock slides."

"We'll be leaving within that time frame," I assured him. "We're getting rather low on food ourselves."

The young man nodded. "I'll just pitch my tent over there, out of your way. I'll be gone in the morning. Thank you for the food, and for this," he said, holding up the wad of pesos.

"No problem," Roberto said, gritting his teeth and nodding with affected cordiality. "No problem at all."

The gendarme, true to his word, was gone the next morning. We slept late that day, having rested very little the night before. I had asked Elena if she wanted me to sleep in her tent that night, knowing that she'd feel safer with someone sleeping next to her. I later wondered if I hadn't just been taking advantage of the fact that she was afraid; but when she took me by the arm and said: "Stay with me, Antonio. That gendarme frightens me," I felt better about having asked her. Afterwards I continued to sleep in Elena's tent. Surprisingly, Roberto revealed no dismay with this arrangement, nor did he display any signs of jealousy or indignation. I shrugged this off, thinking maybe he had set his priorities and had found that the Lagerstätten was more important to him than Elena.

Three days later we were packed and heading out of the valley, our horses gasping and snorting under the heavy weights of our discoveries. The fact that we had left many of the fossils behind caused us a great deal of apprehension, especially as we were climbing back up the same pass that had led us into the valley and Elena noticed more tiny human specks on a saddle between two peaks on the Chilean side of the valley. "More gendarmes," she said. "They must be searching for their friend with the gold tooth."

Roberto turned his gaze to the border guards on the horizon, who were waiving in unison, obviously wanting to speak us. "Don't worry," he said, waving back to the guards in an exaggerated manner. "They can't touch us now."

III.

Three weeks after our return to Buenos Aires, as the three of us sat in Roberto's office discussing a paper that we were to present to the Paleontological Congress in London, there came a knock at the door.

"Excuse me. Dr. Olivos?" said a bald, diminutive man with big lips and a double chin. He announced in a calm voice that his name was Colonel Santos. "May I sit down?" he asked politely.

"Sure. Sit down," Roberto said. His face betrayed an alarm at this strange visit. "What can I do for you, Colonel?"

The Colonel gave us a disarming smile, as if to put us at ease. "Something's come up regarding your expedition to the Andes," he said, "and I just wanted to go over a few things with you."

"What's this all about?" Roberto asked. He leaned back in his chair, nonchalantly, and tapped a pencil against the desk.

"The location of your discovery—" The Colonel pulled out a map. "Can you spot it for me?"

"Well. I'm not familiar with this map," Roberto said. "We used the Lagos surveys."

"Oh, yes. The Lagos surveys." He opened his briefcase and pulled out another set of maps. When the correct quadrant had been found, he spread the map out on the desk, and the four of us stood over it, glaring at it as if it were a treasure map.

"Can you point to the place?" the Colonel asked.

Roberto placed his finger in the steeply sided valley, denoted with a few tightly spaced contours on either side of the symbolic glacier. "Approximately here," he said.

"And how long were you there?" the Colonel asked. "From what dates, specifically."

Roberto hesitated. He tapped his pencil against the desk, as if this helped him to remember.

"From the twelfth of January to the eighteenth," Elena said. "Why? Is there something wrong?"

The Colonel ignored her question. "So. You were here in this valley. Were you aware that this is a disputed border region?" he asked innocuously.

"Yes. We knew that," I replied. "But according to the Lagos surveys we stayed on our side of the border. I understand that this is a contested area, but we felt we had some basis, given the

circumstances, to continue our work there."

"We aren't aware of the specifics of the dispute—if that's what you mean," Elena said. "We met a Chilean border guard while we were there. He told us that we were in Chile, but he allowed us to stay."

"Yes, I was afraid of that," the Colonel said gloomily. "When did you meet this guard? On what day?"

"On the fifteenth of January," Roberto snapped. "Why is this so important?"

"I think it was the sixteenth," I said. "Not the fifteenth."

Roberto glared at me severely, as if to tell me to shut up.

"Maybe you were unaware of this," the Colonel said, his face retaining its gloominess, "but Chile and Argentina were in the process of settling our border disputes in that region. We were finally getting somewhere, after all these years of endless debates, finally agreeing to a proposed demarcation of our border. The only thing left to do was to sign the treaty, to put a few scribbles on a piece of paper, literally, for us to end this national headache. But now all that has changed."

"What are you getting at?" Elena asked in exasperation. "What exactly is all the trouble?"

"The trouble. Yes, well. There's quite a lot of that. The treaty has been nullified. And it looks as if our relations with the Chileans have been dealt a serious blow."

Colonel Santos slid a photograph onto Roberto's desk. It was a black and white image of a young man lying face-up in a depression in the ground, buried in a shallow grave of the fossiliferous Lagerstätten. There was a bloodstain on the man's shirt. His eyes were open slightly. His mouth was also open, revealing the familiar gold-toothed sneer of the gendarme.

"The Chileans read about your expedition in the newspapers," the Colonel said. "They claim you murdered this gendarme to protect the location of your discovery. They say you buried him in this grave and fled the mountains before they could reach you." He looked at us now with narrowed eyes, as if to glean the truth from our reactions. "They've officially requested your extradition," he continued. "They want to try you for murder."

The Colonel, of course, suspected us of a conspiracy. But I knew that he realized he had no proof of our guilt.

"We have declined, for now," he went on, "their request for extradition. The consensus is that you are the victims of a trumped

up charge by the Chilean military, who blame you in order to sabotage the treaty." The Colonel rose to leave, and as he did so he looked each of us hard in the face, as if to satisfy himself, once and for all, of his judgment of us. I felt certain that he told his superiors that we had probably killed the gendarme, because subsequent to his visit, each of us was followed and watched closely by plainclothes policemen.

One day Colonel Santos called and invited me to meet him for lunch at a café on Florida Street. We sat at a table in the corner of the room. I noticed that he kept eyeing me curiously while he smoked cigarette after cigarette, drank cup after cup of black coffee, and chatted amiably, as if we were old friends. When I asked him why we were there, he stubbed out his cigarette and leaned back in his chair. "I understand," he said, "that your company has made an application to explore for minerals in a valley near the one where you found those fossils."

I admitted that this was true.

"Quite a coincidence, wouldn't you say?"

"I'm not sure what you mean by that, Colonel," I said.

"Well," he went on. "Up until now we suspected Roberto of killing the gendarme. But now, we're convinced that it was you, Antonio."

I laughed, and assured him that his suspicions were wrong. The Colonel continued to accuse me of killing the gendarme, though he was never menacing or threatening in his accusations.

"We've learned," he said, "that your company knew about the treaty all along, that they've been following it step by step over the last five years. They were opposed to the treaty because they knew that if the treaty were signed a large, potentially mineral-rich area would be conceded to Chile as part of the agreement. They lobbied us for months on this issue, and were becoming distressed when they saw that the treaty was nearing a conclusion. They made veiled threats to some of the negotiators. They offered them bribes. One of the congressmen involved told me that a woman showed up at his apartment one night, telling him that she was a gift from a wealthy friend. Still. None of these temptations worked, and so your bosses became desperate."

The Colonel paused to light another cigarette. "Then an opportunity arose," he said, arching his eyebrows and blowing smoke. "Your brother asked you to join him on an expedition that would take you into the heart of this disputed region. And so

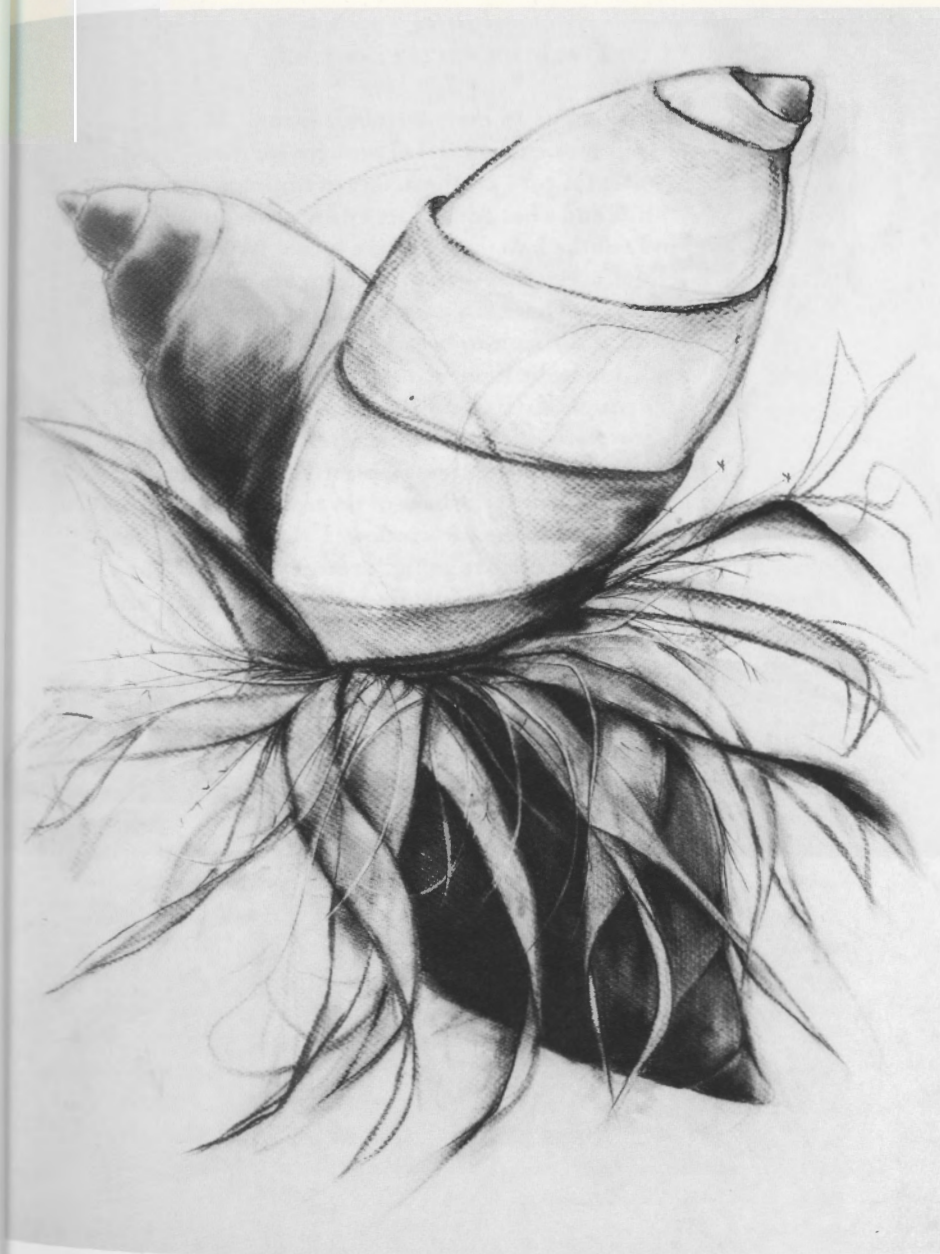
they sent you down there, hoping that you might corroborate the existence of minerals. Well. You found them, and now the treaty has been scuttled, and there will be no concessions of land to the Chileans. Quite a coincidence, wouldn't you say?"

"Are you here to thank me, Colonel, or to arrest me?"

"If it were up to me," he said, "I'd have you shot. But there are many in the government who are happy that things turned out the way they did. So. I suppose I am here to thank you."

The Colonel stood up and dropped some money on the table. "Chau, Antonio," he said, patting me on the shoulder as he walked toward the door. "Be careful you don't cross the border when you go digging for your minerals."

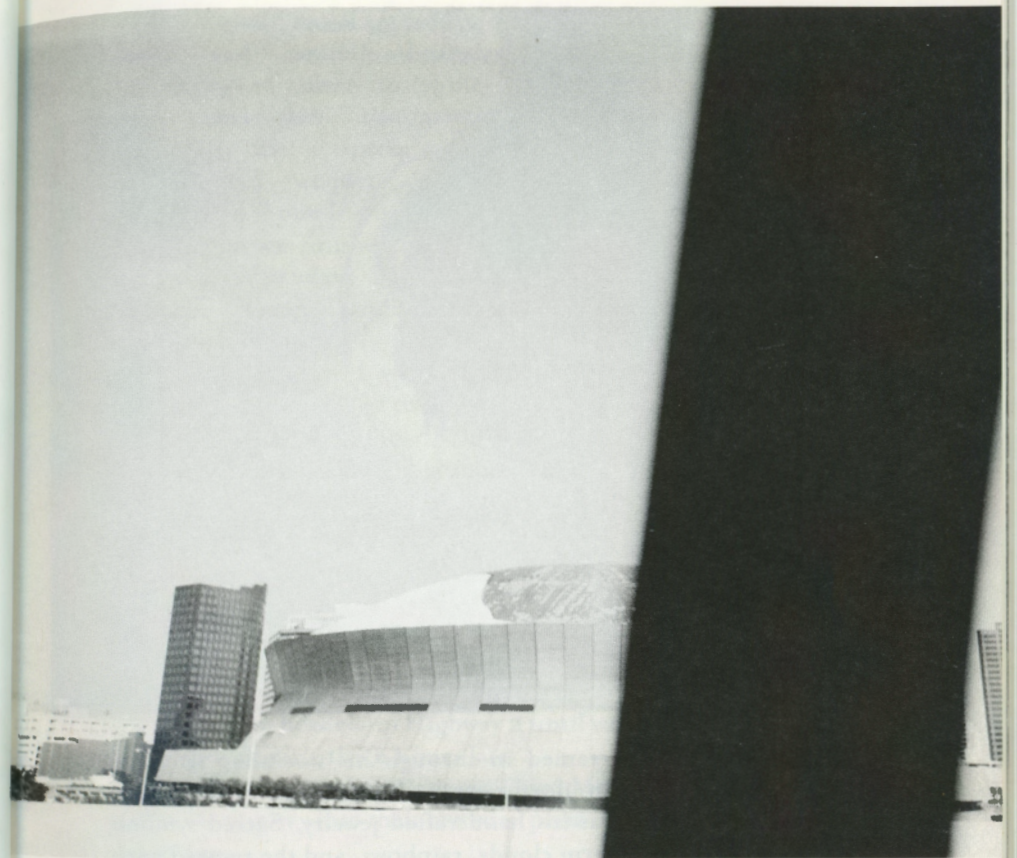
Story and art by B.R. Bonner.



Leaves, ELLEN MCMAHON, charcoal drawing on Rives, 2009.

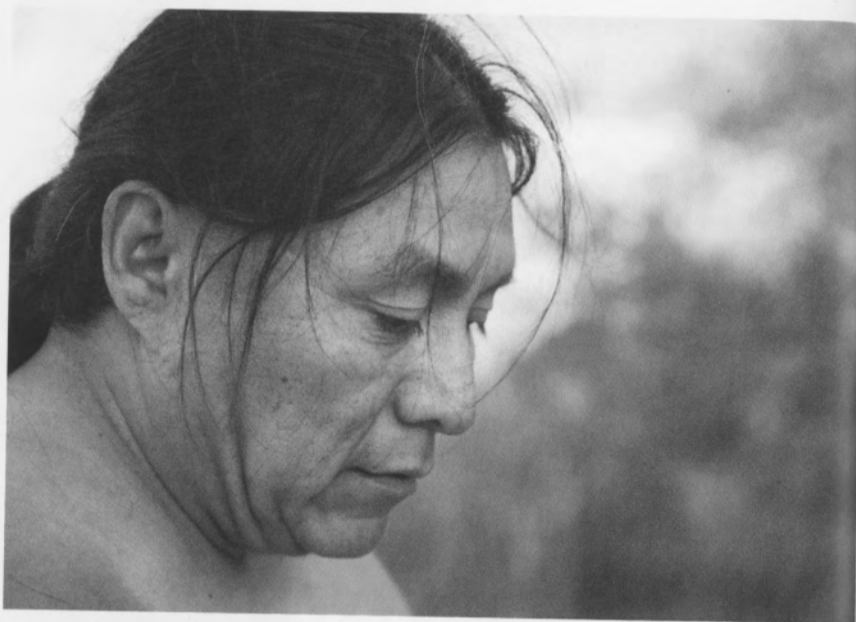
I Drive
{KATHERYN KROTZER LABORDE}

I first cross the parish line in early October, 2005. My kids, in the back seat, silently munch the snacks I brought for their first day back at school. We no longer have the luxury of stopping at a coffee shop for a quick bite and a hot cup. I pass a disposable camera over my shoulder, and tell the kids they can take turns. We creep along the Palmetto Street overpass. Abandoned cars are still lined up all along the shoulder. There is a picnic table up there, too, and some chairs. I find it difficult to breathe. My knuckles are white against the wheel. Once-lit intersections have become four-way stops for the few people driving on this Monday afternoon. My eleven-year-old son stares silently out the window. A thin layer of dried muck coats the houses and trees, sepia-tinting the city. The seven-year-old aims his lens at the back of my neck before turning to shuttered homes outside the car window. I am taking the long way, I know, to get to where we are going, a rescue mission of sorts, checking on cats left behind by a friend who evacuated, who waits and worries at his family's home in Tennessee. But I can't think, really, about feeding cats or the very real possibility of finding them dead. I can't quite think of which is the best way to get there. I drive, swerving around downed branches and debris. I drive, the silence punctuated by the click and pop and ric-tic-tic-tic of the cheap drugstore camera. No breath in my gut. No words for my horror. A promise to a friend. I drive.



Driving, JOEY LABORDE, digital print, 2009.

Hopi Corn: Gift of the Rain
{LARRY LINDAHL}



DUSTY SUNLIGHT streamed in through his workshop windows on Second Mesa, in northeastern Arizona, as artist Duane Tawahongva showed us his handcrafted jewelry. Sacred symbols of the sun, moon, storm clouds, rainbows, and the revered corn plant appeared on many pieces. Ancient petroglyphs on others, all hold meaning and stories from relating to the Southwestern landscape for over a thousand years.

Living on the outskirts of Mishongnovi, the village where he was born, Duane sells his award-winning silver overlay earrings, bracelets, belt buckles, brooch pins, and pendants at art shows across the country.

On the hot afternoon that we first met, Duane crafted a silver overlay pendant, as I photographed him for an Arizona Highways assignment about Hopi artists.

In his workshop near the edge of tall white cliffs, I captured him cutting a tiny design from sheet silver using a delicate wire saw, soldering the overlay to a silver base, and then soaking it in oxidizing solution.

He moved to a polishing wheel, and carefully buffed the blackened silver to shine again, and then hammered the design into a convex curve on an old wooden block. He polished it one last time, and seeing that it was finished handed me the small pendant, a detailed Bighorn sheep symbolizing prosperity, as a gift.

Now, years later, I wear the wedding ring he offered to make when he heard I was marrying Wendy. He crafted two silver overlay snakes intertwined around the band on our matching rings. Snakes are said to carry prayers in Hopi tradition.



On a warm spring day Duane phoned, as he occasionally does, to tell us that a ceremonial Kachina Dance was scheduled. That weekend we drove from our home in Sedona up Oak Creek Canyon and through Flagstaff toward the small town of Luepp. From there we headed up Highway 2 until we reached the remote Hopi mesas nearly three hours later.

We found Bacavi, the village on Third Mesa holding the dance, and made our way into their crowded plaza under the baking, high desert sun.

A deep, steady, resonate drum filled the centuries-old plaza as kachina dancers rhythmically circled inside. The kachinas wore elemental pigments painted on bare skin, adorned in a variety of buffalo fur, deer horns, horsetail hair, leather, and feathers. Kachinas, I was told, represent different spiritual aspects of life in the very complex and secretive Hopi cosmology.

Sensing the connection this ceremonial dance brought to the village, I was struck with the reverence and friendliness of these descendants of the Ancient Ones. Between dances the kachinas generously included everyone. They brought out boxes of food and tossed apples, oranges, bananas and cookies to the kids, grandparents, uncles, sisters, and the rest of us watching.

I felt a depth of community that I yearn to feel in my own world.

Last July, Duane let us know about a Home Dance. On this occasion, more than sixty kachina dancers wore similar bold ochre and black stripes painted on their bare chests, arms, and legs with identical hand-woven white kilts, a turquoise-colored sash that held a dangling fox pelt, and a turtle shell rattle tied to one leg.

The sun backlit a tall orange or green parrot feather wavering on their head with downy feathers fluttering below like clouds in the breeze, and long horsetail hair falling like curtains of rain. With each haunting step, they chanted in guttural unison. The repetition created a powerful scene.

Between dances the kachinas presented young Hopi boys a small bow and arrows, and girls a hand-carved kachina doll tied to a tall, green cattail stalk visible above the crowd. Young maidens stood watching from a distance gathered in groups wearing hand-woven white dresses and traditional hair whorls.

Many of the moving prayers of these ceremonies ask for rain to water their corn in this dry land, and at the end of the hot day, we felt rain begin to magically sprinkle down. The gift of rain from the deep twilight sky could not be ignored; it came as their blessing. On the drive home, a steady rain fell watering their hidden cornfields.



It was early September when Duane invited us to come up to the Hopi mesas for a harvest and corn roast. Recognizing the intricate and sacred relationship Hopis have with corn, we felt honored, and eagerly said yes.

He had invited us to meet at his house, so he could take us to his field. At the top of Second Mesa, we took a long side road and just past a stone retaining wall turned again to descend the steep dirt driveway. Duane came out of his workshop and greeted us with a smile and warm hug of friendship.

We gave him gifts from our garden, tomatoes, basil, and mint picked fresh that morning. He had sandwiches ready, and we brought snacks for our day in the field. We loaded into his Silverado pickup, and towing his empty flatbed trailer down Highway 87, we soon turned onto a bumpy dirt road, and headed into the boonies he warned us.

Duane explained about the nearby clan fields, and that his field was further out on no-man's land where he had found an uncultivated wash and cleared the brush. Today was a harvest for the corn he had planted months earlier. Bouncing onward toward more and more open space, we finally arrived.



He parked alongside his cornfield, and we carried our lunch walking between rows of diligently weeded soil that he tends alone. Duane's crop grew tall, and held deep, healthy green in every leaf, radiating with vibrancy.

"We care for the plants like children," he told us.

On the far side of the field we set down our things. Duane took off his shirt, and told me to take mine off and go wild. I shed my T-shirt, and let my skin feel the sun and wind as we began collecting sticks of driftwood for a fire.

As the woodpile grew, Wendy and I became more familiar with the land.

Lighting our fire the wet wood smoked and sputtered taking slowly to the flames. We added some dry tumbleweed and in a flash, bright orange flames erupted, the scent of our fire mixing with the aroma of tilled soil.

Duane began picking corn, and walking the rows he taught us to find husks with the silk drying to red-brown.

"Squeeze the end of the ear and if it feels full and tight within the husk its ripe," he said.

With a quick wrist snap he harvested a ripe ear without damaging the mother plant and dropped the husk into the large cloth bag that I carried. We filled the bag until it bulged like Santa's sack of toys, emptied it by the fire, and filled it again.

When we returned to the fiery bed of coals we began arranging the husks in a single layer over the coals. Smoke billowed into a cloud, flames popped out, quickly disappeared, and the smell of sweet corn roasting on the fire slowly filled the air. Wendy commented that the aroma was one of the best she'd ever smelled. Duane proudly smiled.

Broken clouds wallowed in and out across the sun, rain curtains bent to the horizon surrounding us as they had all day, moving in separate storms. Wind seemed to foretell an approaching downpour, yet the sky above our gathering remained friendly and calm.

We kept moving husks, rotating the uncooked side onto the heat using sticks for tongs, and the blanket of once-green corn seared to brown and black. When the corn was roasted to perfection we began pulling it off the fire to cool, bits of burnt husk floating away in the wind.

With his long black hair flowing over his shoulders, the sun shone down on a farmer familiar with shirtless days in the field, and he taught us the Hopi word *naalöyö'* meaning four, explaining how many years he had planted in this wash. When a rainbow briefly appeared, he gave us the word for rainbow.

Duane finally pulled the blackened husk off a roasted corn and radiated with an inner sense of accomplishment as he chewed into the juicy, smoky-flavored, plump white kernels. We joined the feast, sitting on the ground next to the fire, all the elements present and in harmony. Soil and rain, sunshine and fire, and the ancient traditions passed down from father to son held their stories inside each bite.

What stayed with me during our conversation was his mentioning the need of a strong will to survive. Tending the land shows the will to survive, and giving back to the land shows reverence for life. Hopi people are survivors. Practice and continuity flow through their generations. Working in the field keeps knowledge alive.

Duane shared, "After my father's stroke he can't visit the fields, but I keep living our tradition of growing corn, with his respect for the land, and a good heart."

He follows his father's way and had planted beans to replenish the soil that the corn would deplete. He grows squash and melons in another field and the white, yellow, and blue corn he tends daily is full of life. He takes care of the land and it takes care of him.

After our corn feast, Duane quietly left the fire, started his John Deere tractor, and spent the next hour digging out new weeds and brush.

When he finished the work he asked me to drive his truck until we got to firmer ground before loading the tractor. Watching him in the rearview mirror, I saw blue-gray rain curtains trailing him down the road from the east.

A dark cloud to the west hung to the ground where the bumpy dirt road was aiming. We got the tractor onto the trailer, and Duane climbed inside the truck with miraculous timing. A fierce rain caught us from both directions pelting the windshield, while purple lightning ripped into the ground below the mesas.

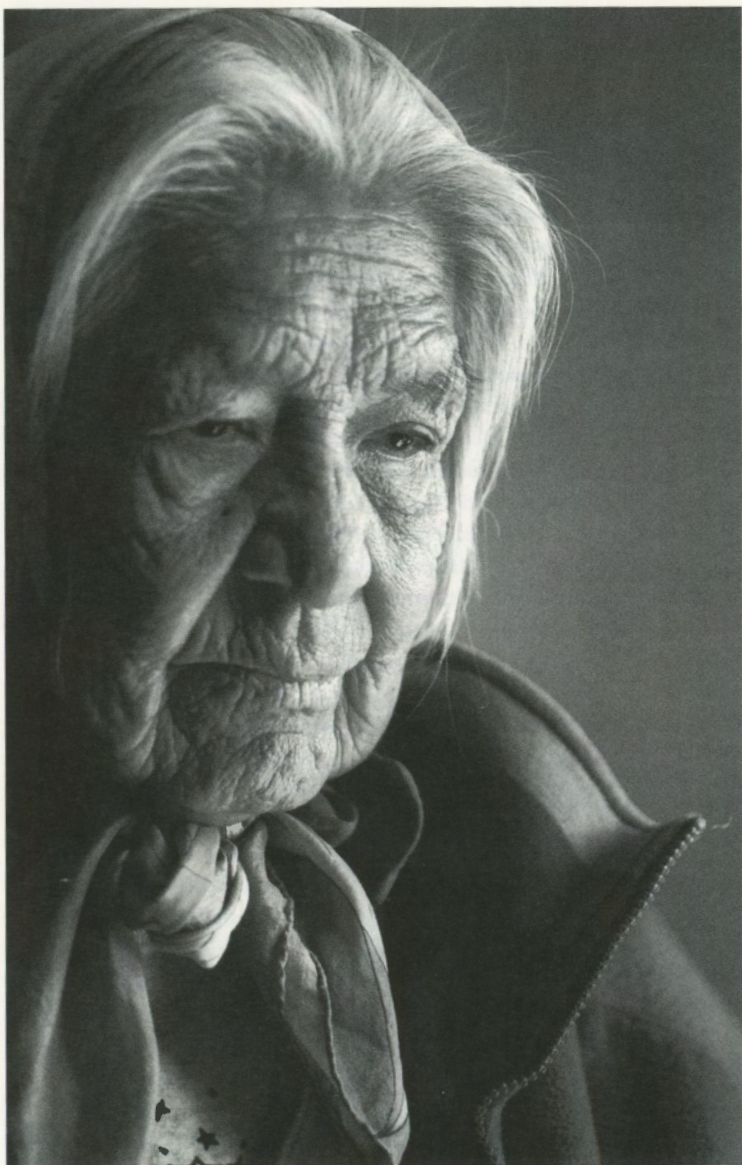
We cautiously reached the highway and climbed the mesa to Mishungovi where the streets of his village glistened like polished stones after the storm. Golden afternoon sunlight slowly emerged. The storm clouds moved silently across the expansive valley below his jewelry workshop. He parked and then, like another good omen, a bright rainbow floated down connecting sky and earth as rosy clouds passed under the rising moon.

We stood quietly in the glow of twilight. Our friend Duane handed us two bags of roasted corn to take home, to remember, savor, and share. Saying our good-byes, Wendy and I headed down the mesa steeped in fresh memories of rain and rainbows, earth and sky, corn and fire, clouds and the moon.

We had witnessed the living elements that Duane instills as powerful sacred symbols in his jewelry. Their meaning is still beyond our full knowing, yet in the generosity that Duane shows us, these gifts of participating, he offers a glimpse into a deeper understanding that we carry home.



Essay and art by Larry Lindahl.



Portrait (Roberta Blackgoat series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph.



Shepherding (Roberta Blackgoat Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph.

Born in 1918, Roberta Blackgoat was a traditional Navajo woman, living on the reservation in Northeastern Arizona throughout her life. In the 1970s, the Navajo protested the mining of coal by the American government on their lands. In response, the government redrew reservation lines such that the coal would be on Hopi lands; the Hopi were not resistant to mining. After the lines were redrawn, 15,000 Navajo and Hopi were forcibly relocated from their homes. This caused considerable conflict with Navajo tradition and thus some families stayed in protest. Roberta stayed and continued to live her traditional way of life there, as a shepherd. Until her death in 2002, Roberta was at the forefront of movement to have her lands returned to her people.



Trimming Goats (Roberta Blackgoat Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph.

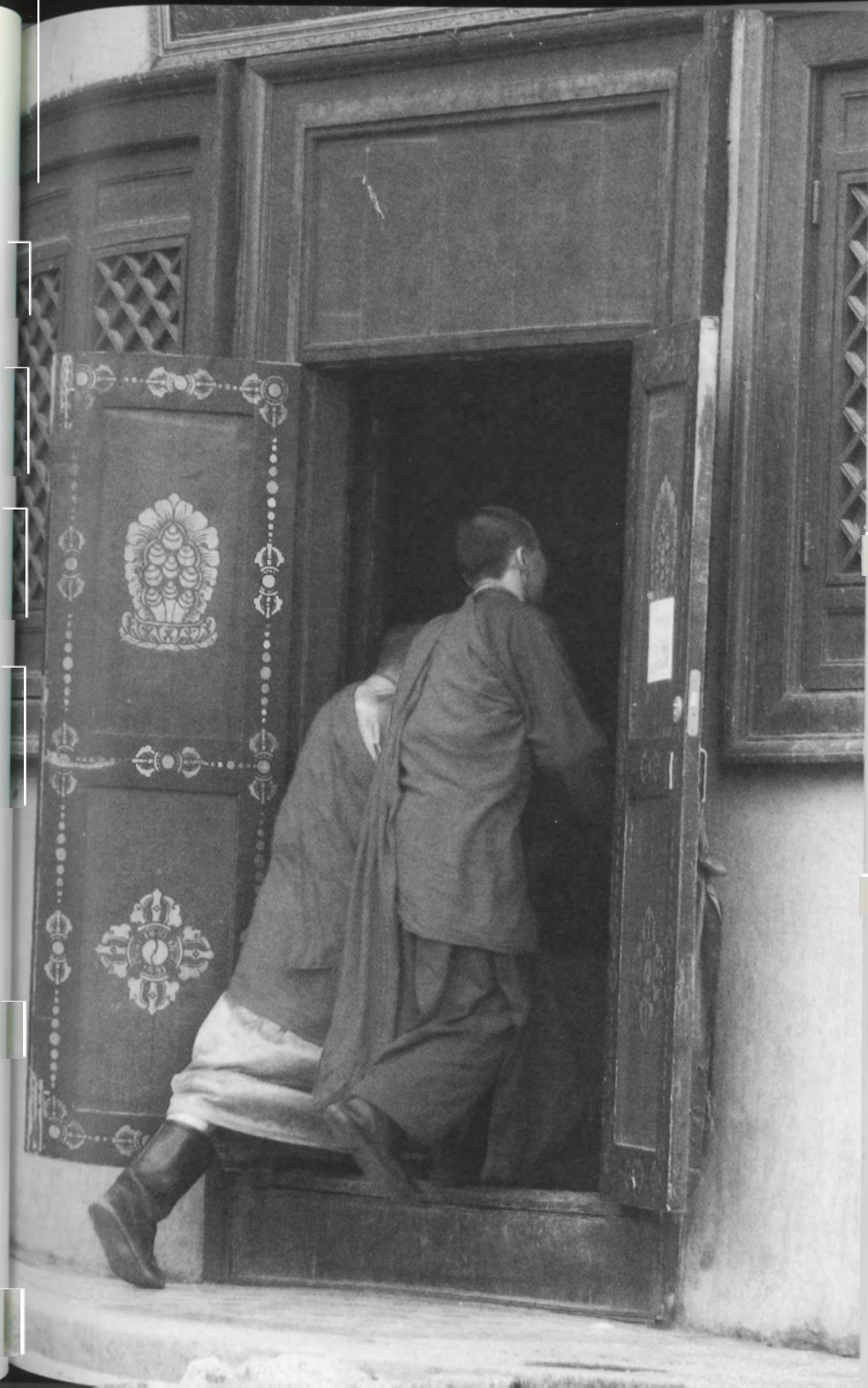


Untitled (Roberta Blackgoat Series), BEN KIRKBY, digital photograph.

Devotion
Gandan Monastery, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
{SUZANNE ROBERTS}

The morning chants echo through the monastery.
I approach the old monk. He will read my sutras.
He takes both hands, turns the palms up.
Incense and sweat hang in the air. The monks silence
their chants and break for a breakfast of porridge.
The old monk says something. I look
at the translator. She says, "He says he can tell you,
but only after you understand. After your work
had more attention." He nods. His maroon robes
sweep the floor as he turns to go. Outside the gates,
the mist turns to rain. A woman crouches
on the street, scooping rain water from the gutter
with a paper cup into a thermos. Street children
in plastic sandals with wet socks sell bird seed.
Old women offer small bottles of ablution.
Pigeons rise with a flutter into the boundless sky.

Poem and art by Suzanne Roberts.



Letter to Paul
{JEREMY FREY}

Imitating many courtiers of writing, I wore my best shirt on the first date. And a borrowed shirt it was. Naïveté and the good looks of great ideas seemed my only reserve. Idea, innocence and passionate concern the bouquet of flowers behind my back. The childlike desire to change the world with words. I am yoked, so it seems, to writing. Instruction from a fanatic: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." You the letter writer, to the early church at Corinth, among others. She believes, Paul: Writing believes, in me. We are yoked, we got that part down. It is my doubt you might call sin, or darkness.

Paul, I remember this your most intimate letter, and your traveling to Damascus. That blinding light on the road, in the way, seeing through you, your eyes bursting with pain, you turning your back. The surrounding wave that light becomes. The darkening of your internal world. Your kinship with Jonah.

Your being spit out of the belly of the whale of shame. Your retching. That first deep breath in the air of the changed world. "All things change when we do." So you changed your name. Left the womb of darkness, your rage at the failed kingdom, on your road to Damascus, your proverbial Nineveh, that rage still a thorn in my side, the bouquet rejected. Later, your friends lowered you and your hair and your shirt in a basket from a window. Even later, rumors of your being beheaded — or was your death at the hands of stones? — the stones still unconscious of their fullness in sin, the casting off of responsibility. Your death like swallowing water when compared to the intense light on your road. The face of God. Horror.

And still later, in the fourth century — after the pagans ran Damascus for thousands of years, after the Jewish presence for another thousand, after your lowered status from a window, your escape in a basket — Constantine takes up your Christ and converts the synagogue. In 634 the Muslims conquer Catholicism's dominance; the church shifts to the mosque. The Great Mosque stands today. Three fires have not brought it down. Its dome, and tens of minarets, and three towers still stand. Three towers. I wish we understood these as the three sibling religions having found a home in the oasis that Damascus rests. The dome in the center the breast of the mother, worshipped by three siblings. We're all still children trying to shape the world with words.

Paul, I love this world and everything in it. Two towers in a new city now crumbs of dust. We wept for a week. We babble, children lost in pride, now wander full of aim, enraged, the targets of shame invisible to blind eyes. We should stop building monuments; we do not yet understand a grain of sand. The terrible blessing disguised in destruction: New language.

Paul, your rage stills a thorn in my side. But the flowers have not wilted. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers ... what fellowship can light have with darkness?" Paul, why do you still fear darkness? Surely there can be no such thing as light without dark. And this: dark is made heavier by the presence of light. Dark is lighter than light.





Bubbles and Jump Rope, SARAH ZIDONIK, mixed media (etching, collage, ink on board), 14 x 9 inches. 2009.

A Statement from the Artist

{SARAH ZIDONIK}

In my work I am grappling with the idea of helping people and at the same time feeling helpless in this desire. No matter what one does to alleviate human suffering, it will persist. My role as an artist is to address this conflict in order to provide a larger understanding and peace with this struggle.

Netting has provided an important symbol in much of my work. Mosquito netting in many parts of the world can provide a temporary and life-saving sanctuary. Netting can also be seen as a trap or uncomfortable enclosure, perhaps reflecting on an overprotective obsession. Still, it is porous, ephemeral, and delicate. I use nets to interact with figures in various ways reflecting these ideas. Often netting will act as a landscape in which figures reside, creating a kind of foundation for them. At other times nets encroach on the figures themselves, sometimes blanketing them in a comforting manner, and other times barely brushing a figure's hands. In other work the net acts as the filling for cocoons in which figures are resting (or are trapped).

Along with symbols of protection and enclosures, I also investigate transitional spaces. What happens when one leaves a protective space? What happens when a baby leaves the protection of a mother's womb? What happens when a person dies? The movements in and between life create a background for my motivation to heal.

White Girl in the Borderlands
(With apologies to Gloria E. Anzaldúa)
{JENNY GUBERNICK}

To live in the Borderlands means you

Shiver in the 71-degree cold cursing
Dry skin and short-sleeved shirt:
Pretending to be a hipster you stand outside at
Night, secretly terrified by the sight of your own breath;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing
The secret places, the places between past and present,
Between fairytale and history, the Valley of the Moon,
The Garden of Gethsemene off of Congress Street,
Where you can see people praying or crying;

Cuando vives en la frontera
People-controlled machines swerve towards you if you dare
navigate
The city without a car, without a barrier
Between yourself and the dust, and the wind,
And the aching sunlight that turns forearms to shields;

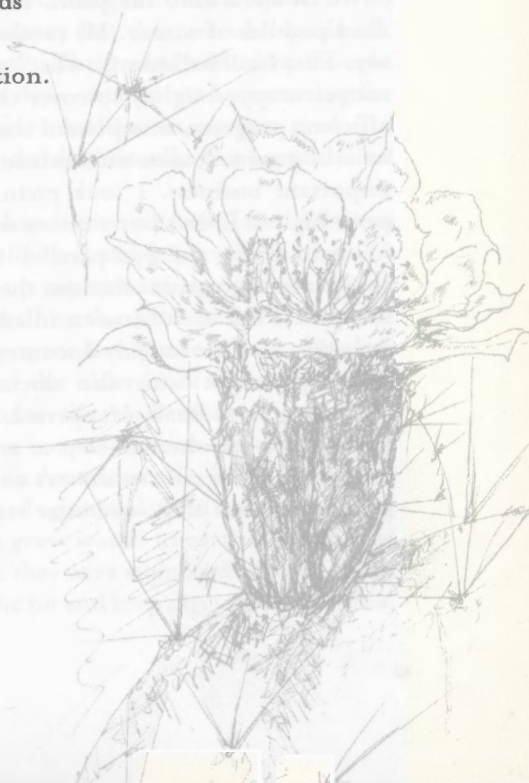
To live in the Borderlands means to
Die in the Borderlands and bury your friends in the
Cemetery that blooms, out of place, obscenely green
In the middle of the city, the wasteland of
Furniture stores, with giant hot dogs selling art;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to
Straddle two worlds or more, not getting stuck in one place
Like when you walk down the street and catch your foot
In an apathy of wet cement and catcalls;

In the Borderlands
You are transparent to the faces of those whose lives
Are strung up on the walls like shrunken heads
Or heads of garlic
They're strung up and tiled into everything;
Just a tumbleweed
They wait for you to blow by;

To live in the Borderlands means
To learn about the Borderlands, to immerse yourself
In crumbling history and vigorous cooking
And stare at art and learn to weave
And to turn as many pages as you can ;
To survive the Borderlands
You must live at a crossroads

But choose only one direction.



Claiming Desiland

{AMNA I. AHMAD}

We skirted the village in a direction I didn't recognize and turned left onto a track lined with twin rows of mesquite trees. They were rangy and not over-tall, their delicate-looking canopies feathery, durable — made to withstand long seasons of no rain. The car crept along the humped road, made that way so that rainwater would flow off onto the surrounding fields. The wheat was foot-high in February, a vibrant springy green, uniform in height, with each little plant starting to make its sheaf of seeds. We pulled partway off the road and parked next to a buffalo heifer tethered to a wooden donkey-cart. The cart wasn't hitched to anything — the platform's back edge sat on the ground and its parallel bars (between which the donkey would trot) pointed up into the air. The calf stood with her front feet near the cart and her back feet up higher, on the shoulder of the road, in an uncomfortable-looking posture. She rolled the whites of her eyes at us and lowed. To our right lay a cracked plain of reddish-tan earth, broad and dotted with more mesquite trees, flat except for the mounds of soil marking the graves of the late people of Mirpur.

We trooped onto the plain, following a path between the last mud puddles of winter. My mother first, then Khala Bina, then me. They both walked with what I privately call their 'village walk': scarves wrapped tightly to cover their heads, eyes ahead, making efficient progress, one behind the other, not talking. It was the walk of grown women on a mission, on their way to take care of important business. I took pictures as I walked behind them, pointing my little silver camera sometimes at the backs of their heads, bobbing along in parallel like the heads of ducklings, and sometimes at the sister shadows they cast, shapes like nuns in their wimples. I felt torn between inhabiting the moment with all my attention and thoroughly documenting it. Imperfect sentimental memory fought with the documentarian's urge to capture everything *As It Really Happened*. In the end I alternated. When I needed to see where to step to avoid the worn graves, I stopped snapping. I lowered the camera completely when we stopped at a group of graves that was better tended and less ancient looking than the rest.

Without pausing to explain anything to me, they faced the graves, raised their palms to chest height, lowered their heads and recited a prayer in a murmur. I didn't remember what was the appropriate thing to recite on the occasion of visiting graves — either Sura Al-Fatiha or Sura Yaseen. I only knew Fatiha. Luckily it is an all-purpose verse, and one I hadn't forgotten since childhood because I use it reflexively whenever I'm in a plane that's taking off or landing. Though I had seen adults recite a prayer when they visited each other to condole after a death, I'd never taken part before. But I was 32 years old, and I supposed I didn't have to wait for someone to issue me an invitation. I followed their example.

Al hamdu-lillah he rabbi l-alamin. Praise be to God, the Lord of the universe. Ar rahman ir-rahim. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Malik e yawm iddin. King of the Day of Judgment. Iyyaka na'budu iyyaka nasta'in. You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. Ihdinas sirat al mustaqim. Guide us to the straight way. Sirat al lazeena an'amta alayhim gayril magdubi alayhim walad dualin, amin. The way of those whom you have blessed, not of those who have deserved anger, nor of those who stray. Amen.

Fatiha asks for mercy — obliquely, by reminding God that we remember him as the creator of all things and their master. Who else would you appeal to for mercy but the one who made all, including the Day of Judgment? The grave in Muslim thought is meant to be practice for that day — a proximate accounting for the ultimate accounting to come. And graves are not meant to be ornamented and fussed over and visited ritually, but kept tidy and otherwise left alone.

When I finished and ran my hands over my face, I noticed them both watching me. My mother looked at me for a long time. To deflect her attention, I took up my camera again and starting framing close-up shots of the red earth of the graves. They were clustered together without any space between, with a mound of soil covering each one. Two of the older ones were edged with unbaked bricks and low headstones; the rest were unmarked except for the raised soil. There was no way to walk between the graves in a Pakistani cemetery, unlike in an American one. Space in the plot was limited, and meant to be used again and again for generations. On occasion people digging a grave would unearth the bones of someone already buried there; they were supposed to respectfully move the bones to one side of the pit and keep digging. Sometimes,

in crowded urban cemeteries, bones would make their way to the surface because of the continual reuse and churning of the same small piece of earth, and one could see the ground littered with femurs and jawbones.

This graveyard was not of that type. It had been in use since the early 1900s, when Mirpur was founded, and the people of the village maintained it. I asked my mother which grave was whose. The farthest one, with a brick headstone and some Urdu text on a broken glass pane, was my great-grandmother's, she thought — Amna Bibi, the one I was named for. The grave of her son, my grandfather, was next to hers, and her husband's just beyond. My mother's uncle was also among them; my mother wasn't sure which was his and which was her grandmother's, and I found this vastly irritating. How does one forget which grave belongs to which person? It didn't matter, I told myself: they all rested within feet of each other, buried in shrouds without boxes and turned on their right sides to face the Ka'aba. Their molecules had surely been moved around and redistributed by now, so that the inhabitant of each grave held atoms that had been part of all the others. But I was most interested in the graves of my grandfather and his mother, who I imagined I would love best, if I had known them.

The only photograph I have of my great-grandmother — as far as I know, the only one of her that exists — was taken after her death. I imagine that it was taken in the instant before her sons lifted her into the air and carried her to the edge of the village for burial. It is a picture of her looking asleep, with the peaceful expression of the virtuous on her face and a garland of jasmine and roses around her head. Her garment is unsewn white fabric as prescribed. The picture is crooked, her orientation in the frame not aligned with either edge. I wondered if the person who took it was too shaken to compose the shot properly, or if the camera had been shoved into the hands of some inexperienced person because the elders couldn't bear to do it themselves. She looks just like her son, my grandfather, and when I saw the picture my dream of my namesake was shattered and rebuilt in an instant. From my mother's stories, I'd constructed a picture of a frail, pretty, saintly woman, wise and imperturbable. But my great-grandmother was sturdy and handsome, with the arrogant nose and determined chin of my mother's father's people. From her face in death I gathered that she had been beautiful, but not in the delicate way I had imagined: more in the way of a dappled mare or a weathered

piece of well-built furniture — beautiful to a purpose. Her family left Jallandar in a bullock-cart when she was a girl to settle a new village in Punjab, where water came from far away and the crops they planted ruled the cycles of life.

○

My parents' house in Arizona was a little enclave of Pakistani culture, and we visited the mother country on summer vacations, spending three or four months at a time with my grandmother and aunts and uncles and cousins. I call it Desiland, after *desi*, a word used to describe South Asian people, places, and things. Arizona was where we spent most of our time, but Pakistan was where we lived. I spoke Urdu first and didn't learn English until I started school. I wore *shalwar-kameez* to school on days when I had to dress up. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches alternated with *parathas* in my lunchbox. Since *halal* meat wasn't available in our little town, my father bought live animals and butchered them himself in the side yard, including goats for Eid and turkeys on Thanksgiving. My mother and I skinned the chickens in the stainless steel sink, me holding the legs and her wielding the knife.

I didn't find it strange. Maybe because I was born in the era of "free to be you and me," and this had pervaded the ethos of even our little town. Whatever the mechanism, I grew up thinking of myself as Pakistani. So through going was this identity that when I hit adolescence, I didn't have any secret boyfriends (boyfriends were not allowed), or even any dates. This state of affairs persisted even after I left for college. I told myself that I was open to an arranged marriage or to finding my mate myself — whichever happened first. But the reality was that my inculcation in traditional ways was thorough. I had no idea how to go about it for myself. So when my parents introduced me to a handsome, sanctioned prospect when I was 23, I married him. Born and raised in Pakistan until he came to the U.S. for college, he and I, it turned out, had very different ideas of what our marriage would be, and within the year, we divorced.

The failure of the marriage, and the smaller failures of communication and understanding within it, underscored for me how essentially American I was. I had certain (Western) expectations from life that could not be met in so traditional a framework. After the divorce, I let myself drift from *desi* people and social situations. I saw these ways as being in conflict with my adult human need to choose my path for myself. I couldn't

see a meaningful way to access the positive aspects of my cultural inheritance and get away from the patriarchal ones I found so odious — they were bound up together in my mind, so that if I wanted one I had to take the other as well. So I let it go. I didn't visit Pakistan for eight years — the longest I'd ever been away. My cousins grew up; my aunts and uncles grew old. My relatives opened businesses, built houses, left the country for more options. Parcels of my grandfather's land were sold off to settle disputes among my uncles, and the cities of Punjab encroached inexorably on formerly agricultural lands. Pakistan's first motorway was built, allowing travelers to whiz from Faisalabad to Lahore without ever having to slow down to let a donkey-cart cross the road.

Through all these changes, I kept my distance. For those years, I avoided even desi music. It hurt too much to hear it; in its bittersweet evocation I felt the beautiful imperfection of all that I was cut off from in my self-imposed exile from desi culture. I listened to it in the occasional nostalgic mood with a pit of longing in my stomach, and some other feeling like guilt. I figured out that I felt to blame for letting my grasp of my Desiland slip, like I should have done something to prevent the loss.

I eventually became aware that this distance was costing me too much. I made a plan to visit, with the intention of collecting and documenting the stories of my family and their geography as a way of situating myself within them, and to give myself a project, legitimate cover for asking some of the questions I had never thought to ask. My first time back I went in the winter. I sat with my grandmother and collected and recorded all the family stories I could pry out. As part of my desi-ness reclamation project, my aunt arranged for me to see the traditional production of sugar, from the sugar cane being crushed in iron mashing jaws powered by bell-wearing, curved-horned oxen, all the way to the final step of cooking the juice for hours on a cane-fed fire and skimming it all the while. We sat on a charpai and watched the process from just outside the circular path of the oxen, their nailed-on shoes glinting through the dust with each step of cloven feet. We talked about everything I could remember to ask her: why villages in Punjab were identified by a name as well as a number, from the days when the British divided up Punjab for cultivation (the village we were sitting in was referred to as "Banwa," or 92nd); how drinking water used to be delivered by the maashki in a water-skin (the maashk), and how he was also called behishti because he would go

to heaven for quenching peoples' thirst; how she made her radish parathas; and how I might be able to grow the special radishes in my Brooklyn backyard if I could figure out the difference in growing seasons. I left Pakistan relieved to be connected again, and with a trunk full of stories and images to fortify me until the next time.

o

The homeland for me is a different one than for my immigrant parents. I go there and feel the novel, unsettling feeling of looking just like everyone else. No one there would pick me out as anything but Pakistani. Being an anonymous part of the majority is a peaceful and delicious experience for me, used to being a novelty most everywhere else. Before I moved to New York City, I hadn't experienced anything like it in the U.S., and even here in my beloved city, I'm a minority. Looking like everyone else gives me access to an experience I can only have in that part of the world, and I like knowing I have this option. Walking the streets in Lahore, I look like everyone else, utterly in place in that ancient, dusty cosmopolis, and no one glances twice. If the people thronging the streets look like me, and indeed many Punjabis are my blood relatives (as we would find if we stopped someone on the street and parsed our reticulating web of relations), then the symbols and culture they take for granted are my birthright too, reminders of the past I also inherited.

Yet I recognize that it's this distance, this not being swaddled in desi culture, that makes me see it as something elusive and precious. If I had followed a more traditional path, I might be living in a little pocket of Pakistan right here, in an old-fashioned family that conflated caring and controlling in one big paternalistic stew. It would bear down on me so hard that I wouldn't think to miss it. As much as I've lamented my distance from the motherland, in this way I believe I dodged a bullet: as an educated North American woman living in New York City, I can do whatever the hell I want. The city confers freedom from the Desi-net — that chain-mail network of aunties and uncles who are everywhere you go, no matter how old you are, and who will call your parents as soon as they get home to share information on your whereabouts and whether there were boys in the vicinity. In Brooklyn, no one bats an eye when I walk next to a boy. The feeling of being always under observation carries autonomy costs too heavy to bear, and I am grateful for the absence of this tension. Still, total separation from all aspects of the homeland was not what I wanted. My ideal was

to be free to live a grown-up Western life and still integrate the homeland into myself, so the journey home would be a short one I could take whenever I want.

Now, I visit every year or two (though two years feels like too long). I drink up the place greedily. I let myself get sentimental over the fields of yellow mustard flowers in bloom. I listen to ghazals with no more sorrow than their poetry demands, and if I don't understand some of the words, I don't lament my two-sided past. Home has become a path instead of a destination. The longing for home hasn't subsided, but the ache now is more sweet than bitter. I understand that I will never get there, because "there," the place where I fit perfectly, doesn't exist. I am a true hybrid, distinct from both my homes and a wholehearted believer to neither. They combined to make me, and there's no aspect of me that isn't influenced by the dual legacy.

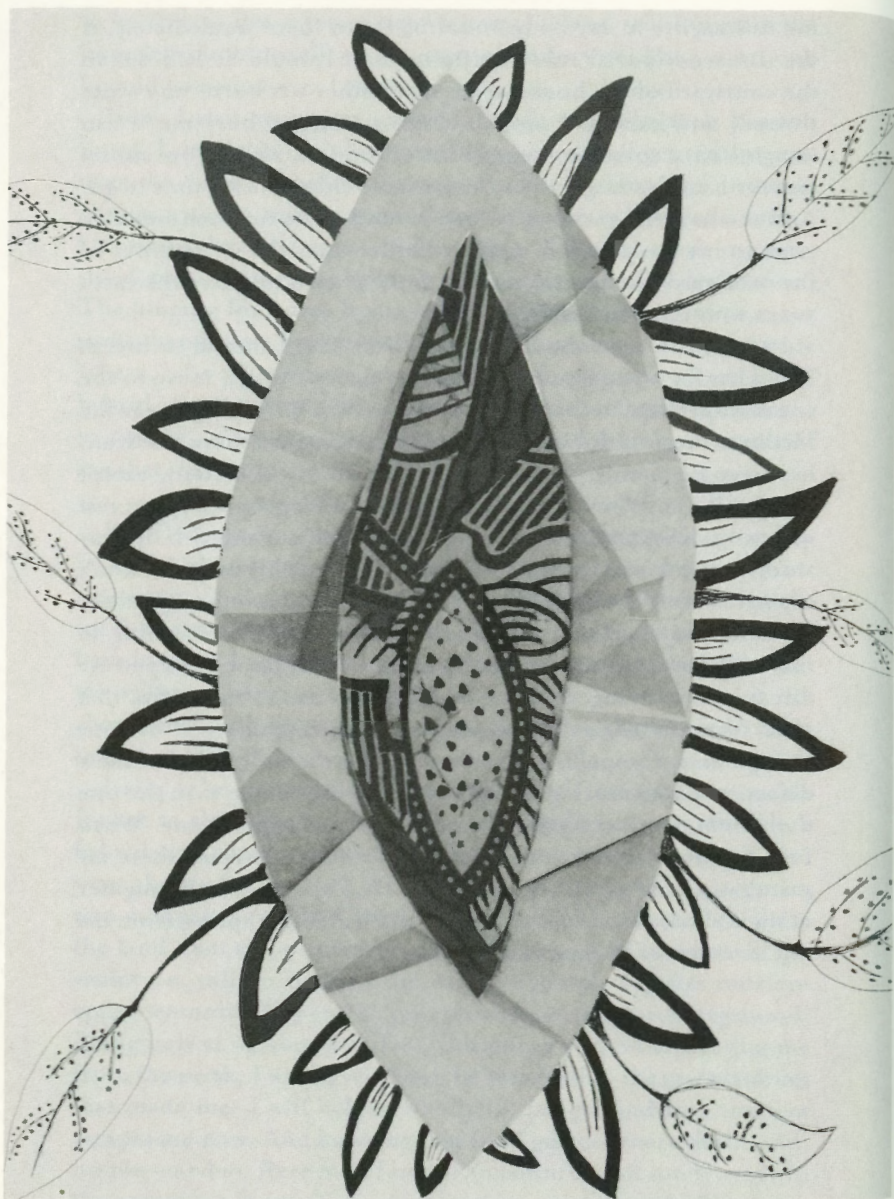
©

We filed out of the graveyard in the same way we'd gone in: by rank. My mother, the general, led the queue; my aunt (her lieutenant) followed; and I, foot soldier and archivist, brought up the rear, photographing their silhouettes against the emerald backdrop of baby wheat. We piled in the car and drove into the village, where we had plans to call on relatives and visit the abandoned wells giant banyan trees that were characters in their stories, and in mine.

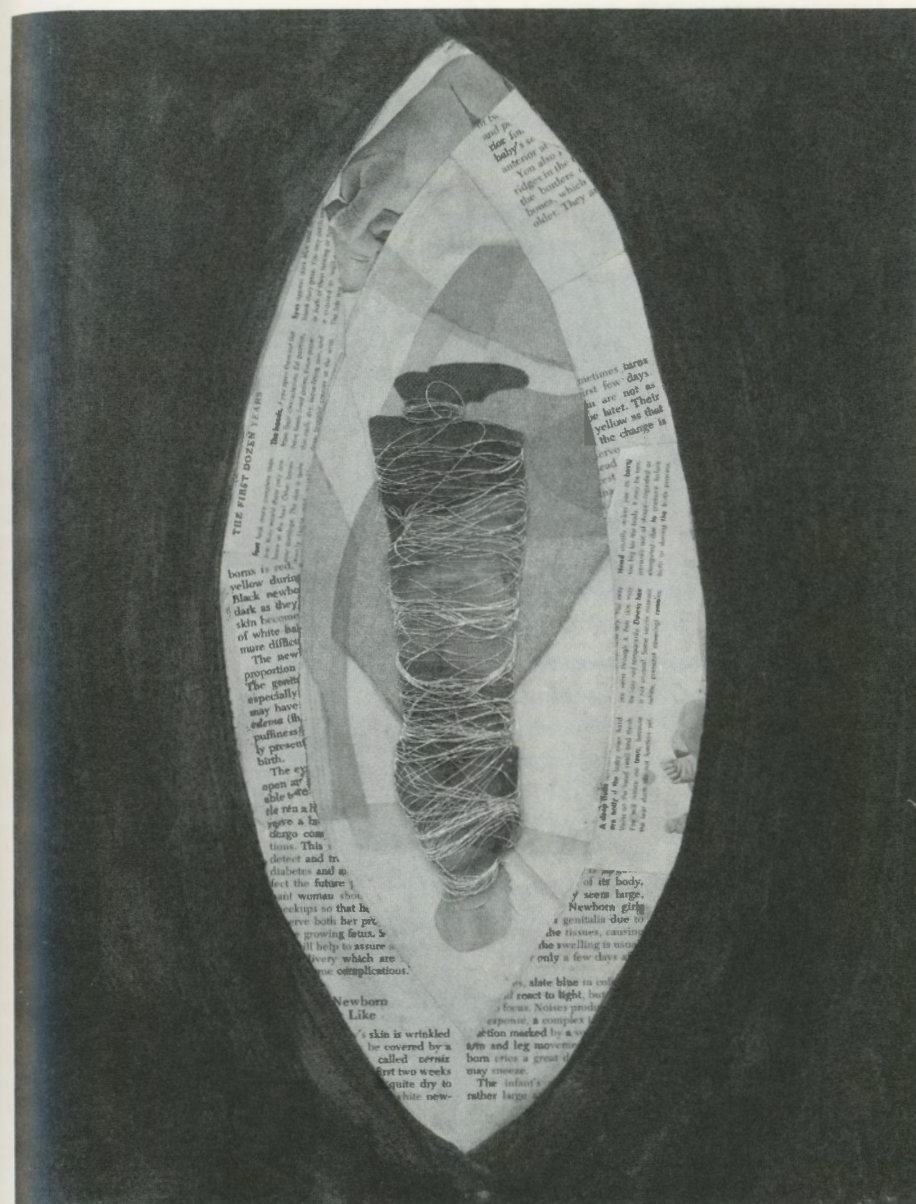
I want to be buried there, in that graveyard. It may be impossible for me to claim Desiland while my identity lives: I am, after all, a hybrid, and there's no escaping all the forces that shaped me. But what about after death? When I die, I will be beyond categories and compartments and partial allegiances. How better to claim the land than to be buried there and let the land claim me? My molecules will go back to the earth — completing the nutrient cycle, commingling with my relative-particles underground. Being buried without a coffin, with only a shroud separating me from the earth, I would very soon be returned to the raw materials that made me. I will belong wholly to that ground in a way that escapes me now. And knowing that I will go back there in the end, no matter what, frees me of having to connect to it too tryingly in the meantime. I am of it, and it is of me, and there I will return. The inevitability is beautiful to me, and makes me want to write my last will and testament more than anything ever has — to specify that I wish to be buried in Mirpur, among my ancestors. It comforts

me to imagine it: my body would be flown there immediately, if the three-day burial rule were to be met. I would be laid out in the courtyard of the house where my mother was born, in a white shroud, and lamented over until it was time to bury me. I can imagine it: at some moment in the afternoon, well before sunset and the time for maghrib prayers, a male elder says it's time to go. And the mourn, and they gather around while the men move in close to lift the platform with its burden into the air and out of the courtyard on their shoulders, to the graveyard where the earth awaits with its open hands.

I know very little about the rest of my life. I intend to live in Brooklyn for a good part of it, and someday I might move to the country, perhaps to the desert, or maybe to a little village near the Mediterranean. I don't know if I will marry again, have children, live near my family. Nothing about my future is certain, except that I will die. When I do, that graveyard where my ancestors rest will still exist. And the final thing I know with any surety is that my atoms come from that soil and want to return. My particles don't experience my ambivalence — they interact with other particles wherever they find themselves and call it home. In returning to that soil, I imagine contaminating things a little bit in the opposite direction — stirring up some ambivalence in the molecules that were formerly my relatives, widening their once-eyes with my foreign ways, compelling them to consider the wide world of their descendants, so much grander and better and worse than the one they lived in — and letting their particles influence mine. When I am finally returned to that dusty red plain in Mirpur where my grandfather and great-grandmother rest, I will again be a daughter of the soil, and the grubs and roots and leaves that spring from me will be native of that earth.



Bright and Beautiful, SARAH ZIDONIK, mixed media (cloth, etching, collage, ink) on board, 12 x 16 inches. 2009.



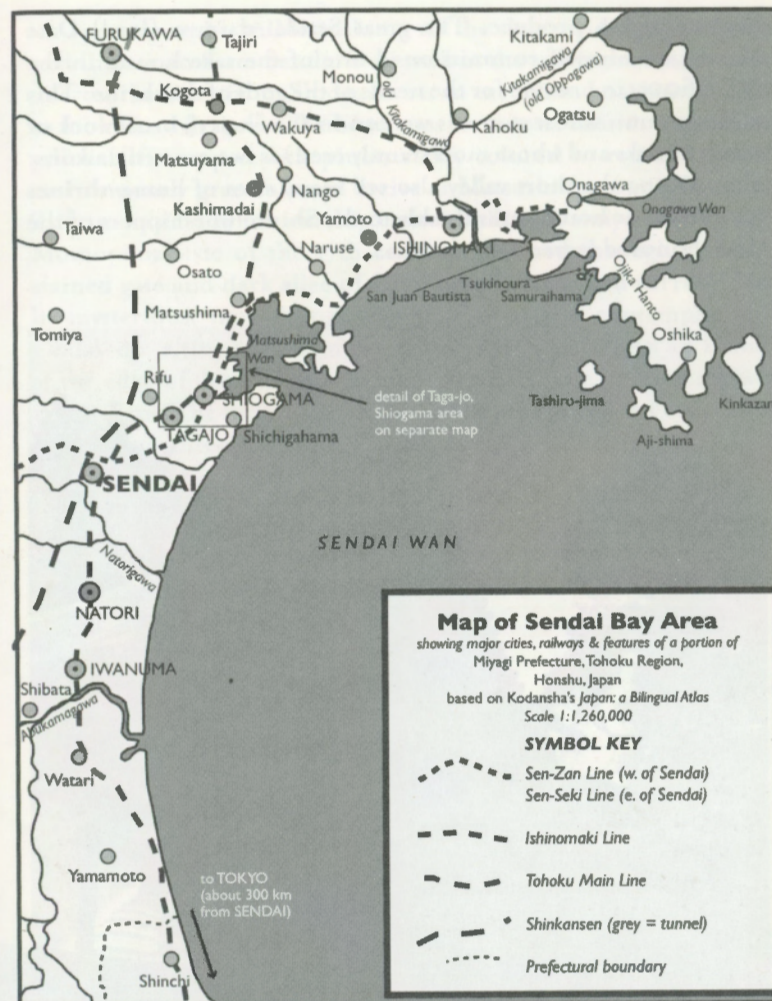
I Wrapped Him Up Tight, SARAH ZIDONIK, mixed media (collage, etching, string, ink, shellac) on board, 12 x 16 inches. 2009.

The Shores of Sendai-Wan: From Shiogama to Matsushima
(KATHRYN M. LUCCHESI)

On the northeastern coast of Honshu, Japan's largest island, a bustling region lies centered on Sendai Wan (Sendai Bay). The bay forms a long, smooth curve, interrupted by the nearly enclosed Matsushima Wan and ending in an abrupt hook: the peninsula of Ojika Hanto, a last bastion of whaling in Japan. Beyond Ojika Hanto roll the broad Pacific swells, where wide variety of local sealife may be found, which still contributes to the best sushi in Japan. Tucked between Sendai-city, the regional and prefectural capital, and Ojika Hanto are two natural harbors: at the hither end of Ojika Hanto there is the fishy-smelling lagoon of Ishinomaki, and just north of Sendai is the ancient port of Shiogama, overlooking the southern reach of beautiful Matsushima Wan.

Shiogama is a town that salt built. Salt, of all the commodities useful to man, is one of the most ancient and pivotal. The saltiness of Shiogama's history is mirrored in its kanji (modified Chinese ideographs), which make up the town's name: 塩釜. A close observation of the two characters shio "salt" and gama "kettle" reveals the second character embedded within the first. One can see in the second the radiating lines of the flame under the lidded pot (kettle), while in the first, these elements are more squared-up, with the lid askew to the left and the whole preceded by the character-radical meaning "earth" or "mineral," together signifying "that mineral which is yielded by boiling in a kettle." Shiogama's name means "the kettle that renders the mineral rendered by a kettle," or simply "salt-rendering kettle."

The humid, often chilly climate of Tohoku ("East-North"--the name for this northeastern part of the island of Honshu), prevents the making of salt through simple evaporation, as it is done in other areas of the world, but easy access to rich nearby forest reserves have made possible the rendering of salt through boiling seawater in clay or iron kettles set over charcoal fires on the beach. According to archaeology displays at the Tohoku History Museum in nearby Taga-jo, salt rendering has been practiced here since long before the coming of agriculture, along with the harvesting of abundant local shellfish, as evidenced by huge shell mounds found on the islands of Matsushima Wan.



Located on the heights overlooking a short, straight, east-west-running valley through which runs a robust stream, Shiogama-town dominates a narrow estuary opening onto Matsushima Wan. The valley floor is lined with shops selling not only the necessities of teapots, paper, and clothing, but also religious items for pilgrims who visit the hilltop Shinto shrines, the most ancient and important in the region. There are shops filled with local sake to offer to the gods (and man), as well as groceries stocked with local strawberries, rare (for Japan) celery, and endless other seasonal

market-garden produce. The great Sendai daimyo (lord) Date Masamune himself commissioned one of the sake houses in the early 1600s, to provide for the needs of the gods of the shrine. This is Urakasumi, whose name is written in the "hairy" brushwork of manly monks and whose mon (family crest) is two crossed daikons. Shops along the short valley also sell many sizes of home-shrines for garden or house, presumably to the Shinto worshippers of the time-honored sacred hill-shrines.



One may arrive in Matsushima via the slow windings of a Sen-seki Line train from Sendai Station, but the traditional method is to cross the water from Shiogama on an excursion boat customized to look like a dragon. The boats pass sandstone islands with pale-yellow cliffs topped with pines, richly colored in red and green and sinuously graceful, and arrive at Matsushima town. There is Zuigan-ji, a Buddhist worship center built by Daimyo Date in the Momoyama style of the 17th century, accessed through a time-stained gate and dark allee of Cryptomeria trees and surrounded by mysterious, moss-hung caves for burial and contemplation. Godai-do, a tiny temple of the same period, stands on an island at the edge of the bay, which can be reached only by crossing two red bridges. The little windows of the temple are opened only once every thirty-three years to reveal within the scowling idols.



While the salt and risky-endeavor gods' shared precinct faces due south, the farmer-god's precinct faces roughly east, for it is with sunrises and seasons, weathers and warmed soils that farmers are concerned: the great, repeating circle dance of the year. At the March festival sacred mimes are performed in this god's honor on a diminutive, square outbuilding stage to the rhythm set by flute and drum. A solemn, bespectacled schoolgirl, dressed as a sacred horse, canters from corner to corner of the stage to bless all of



Tohoku. The farmer in his comic mask then acts out all the work of a long day in the fields, from honing his mattock in the dewy morning to drinking the well-earned blessing of milky sake at its thirsty close, a dancing fan his only prop. All present are invited by the farmer to share in his sake and in the treats he throws to the crowd; strangers kindly beckoned forward by parishioners to partake and be all blessed by his labors.

So much of Japan is mountainous, that flat land for rice paddies must be used wherever it lies, or made by hand with endless toil out of sloping land, the terraces walled in the same snug polygonal masonry, which serves as the base for castles. The kanji for the small bay just north of Shiogama's estuary (transliterated on the map as Hamata) mean "Coast-Field" Bay, and at this point the coastal plain narrows to a corridor barely wide enough nowadays for two rail-lines and a highway to share. The drama of such narrow survival, especially in chilly Tohoku, seems to have linked farming with sacred drama of the jinja: is it so all over the earth? Did Greek drama rise from stories of man wresting life from the gods by the sweat of his brow? Did tragedy arise from the battle for the surplus, held by the great daimyo like Date and the rest? For surely in that mime of the farmer, one could feel the human drama entire.

The shallow waters and sandy coasts of the bays of Shiogama have yielded not only their tribute of salt and rice down the eons, but also a rich harvest of oysters and other shellfish, tunicates and vertebrates in great variety. Tall moorings of bamboo, sometimes seen resting in long, silver-grey bundles against the cliffs of the islands, stand planted in rows in broad tracts in the bay's waters, like enormous rice-seedlings. To these are tethered long garlands of cockleshells, and to these garlands cling the fattened oysters of Matsushima. At the large fish-market of Shiogama, this wealth of seafood comes ashore, to be whisked down Teizan Canal to the port and kitchens of Sendai, and beyond. From the Bay, and from the broader Sendai Wan, and from the Pacific Ocean beyond the outer Oshika Peninsula of Sendai Wan where the whales swim, comes a collection of raw materials for the finest nigiri and sashimi in Japan, dishes that originated in Tohoku. Thus, if one were to find a local chef with best hand and eye and nose for sushi, one could also reasonably expect to find there the best sushi in the world.

As it happens, such a genius of sushi did exist in Shiogama: a wry little man who wielded his long, long, sharp knife as deftly as a sculptor, a sculptor that is, of wafer-thin daikon sheets and quivering slabs of abalone, shaping in his palm generous beds of rice with tiny pillows of bright-green wasabi, fresh-grated from the very wasabi roots decorating a dish of slow-moving abalone, placed on the counter. He reduced buttery sticks of tuna and salmon to diagonal inhabitants of the rice-beds. Bouquets of fish and cucumber went up the elevators to unseen diners above, hairy-crab soup, nigiri, and a sorbet of magnificent local strawberries, a closing conceit of the chef. According to some, he was Sushi Tetsu, the Iron Chef of Sushi, where "iron" means dedication, integrity, and a lack of compromise. The chef had built the slim, green, four-story restaurant named after him, not far from the Hon-Shiogama (Main Shiogama) railway station, situated solidly on the long traditions of Japanese tourism and the immemorial harvests of Shiogama's land and waters.

At night, the streets close to traffic, and the sound of the shuffling straw sandals means the weary throng, who have taken it in turns to carry the heavy shrines all around the town, draw near. A brief time of rest at the stairs' base, and the climb begins, slowly at first, but then they dance the mikoshi up the last stairs in a dizzy reeling from side to side, suggestive of spirit possession. Slender priests in jade-green robes, positioned at the half-way landing, play the drum, gong, and high-pitched gagaku drones to lend momentum, and each supporter not actually under the mikoshi pushes both hands against the shoulder blades of the man in front of him, in a double human chain up the stair. No doubt the men prevent, by their preponderating mass, the backward, down-slope movement of man and mikoshi, a disaster that would clearly signify a loss in the citizens of Shiogama.

The "salt kettle" of Japan concentrates any number of truths. The signs of the imminent in-breaking of the sacred into everyday landscapes are there for the reading: salt on the stairs, polygonal walls rising behind modern fire stations, everyday streets lined with sacred ropes, the sounds of shuffling feet. As long as their direct descendants live in Shiogama, the first inhabitants of Matsushima Wan could have predicted that oysters would grow fat in the shallow bay, that salt would be needed, and that it would be made at least once a year in the sacred kettle, and the gods would extend their blessings



Essay and art by Kathryn M. Lucchese.

Geography of Romance
{MAJED AKHTER}

Consider the spatiality of romance in urban Pakistan. Once you get past the trappings of diamonds and roses, gaudy weddings, and cheesy pop songs, you have a site of extreme intergenerational and ideological contestation.

Romance as an idea is dynamic: how we fall in love today is different from how it used to happen two hundred--or even fifty--years ago. Of course it's a difficult matter to define love, or decide whether it is a universal experience. But it is hard to argue that the process of arriving at love has stayed the same throughout time. My father met my mother on their wedding day. They do not expect me to subscribe to the same notion of romance.

The single most significant factor affecting the dynamic geographies of romance is the increased physical mobility of women and the number of legitimate spaces they occupy. According to the Penguin Atlas of Human Sexual Behavior, about 60 percent of marriages around the world are still arranged. Contrary to Western belief, this does not preclude the notion of romance. What is usually idealized, at least in Pakistan, is the romance that occurs immediately after marriage. The secret surprises that emerge as the young couple gets to know each other, and the initial coyness flowering into warm intimacy is the stuff that respectable Pakistani romance is made of.

But this notion of romance is rooted firmly in the idea that marriages should be arranged by parents or elders of the family, which is itself rooted in young women being spatially segregated from young men. After all, how is a young man to meet a nice eligible lady, when all the nice eligible ladies, by definition, do not enter public spaces?

This is no longer the case, at least for middle- and upper-class Pakistanis. The institution of arranged marriage, and the notion of romance associated with it, is being rocked by the increased spatial ambition of women in today's urban Pakistan. There are now spaces that are legitimate for 'nice ladies,' but that are nonetheless in the public sphere. Universities and offices are just two examples of spaces where women have made massive inroads. These dynamic geographies have expanded the possibilities for romance; they have modified the ways in which we fall in love. Whereas before, a single picture (if that) was all you had to fuel

your passion before marriage, full-out courtships are now possible in the new legitimate spaces.

The public parks of Lahore, lush and green, provide an ideal place for lovers to stroll. Because the images here are not of bearded fanatics and violent militants, the gardens of Lahore do not make their way into the imagining of Pakistan, either within its borders or without. But here is where I see society changing, where I see the true aspirations of young people, regardless of class or religious intensity. Intertwined fingers, hushed voices, stretching out under trees, with shoes removed and placed neatly to the side. And always, the woeful glances at watches ticking away time left together. The men are well groomed and full of strut; the women glow with audacity. Their bodies move to a dance that is as old as the sea, yet at the same time thrillingly new.

Technology has also changed the geographies of romance. The internet and, especially, mobile phones have opened up a new kind of space for both women and men: virtual space. Although a young man dialing random numbers, ad nauseam, until hitting gold, is not normally seen as romantic, it is not much different from frequenting pick-up bars every night. For those more comfortable with the anonymity provided by the written word, chat rooms and messenger services like ICQ and MIRC provide the perfect 'place' to meet someone. Not only does the novel spatiality of cyberspace offer great potential for romance, Pakistani youth, and corporations, are responding vigorously to the opportunity. To what other goal, if not a new geography of romance, are the giant billboards that offer "completely free, late-night mobile conversations" striving for?

Failure to accept the fact that romance is a product of material conditions, among them spatial possibilities, has led to much resentment and resistance from older generations to the changing forms of romance. The clamping down on a romantic space (a secluded bench behind a rose bush) at Government College in Lahore is a case in point. Of course, there are factors more sinister than stodgy old party-poopers at play. The patriarchal habit of delegating women to be the manifestation of society's moral condition has justified restrictions on their personal mobility and freedom in the past, and continues to do so today. The attitudes and material conditions that used to underlie those acts are rapidly changing though, and it remains to be seen whether the older generations can keep up.

Not all changes in romance have to do with aping the West, as older folks might decry. Some members of the older generation understand this, and are content with the older forms being merely acknowledged. Thus, "arranged" marriages become "approved" marriages, and "romance" becomes the more sanitized "understanding." Not wanting to betray the romantic ambitions of my generation, but at the same time understanding the difficulty of letting go, my response to this cautious change in labels is: good enough, for now. The dynamic geographies of romance are responsible for at least some of the changes that we are experiencing as a society.



Leaves, ELLEN MCMAHON, charcoal drawing on Rives, 2009.

BIOGRAPHIES OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS



AMNA AHMAD grew up in Washington, D.C., South Dakota, West Virginia, Virginia, and Arizona. She writes fiction, essays, and poems, often about place, even when she means to write about other things. Her work has appeared in *Adbusters Magazine*, and is forthcoming in the anthology "Brown Souls." She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

MAJED AKHTER is a student of Geography at the University of Arizona. He has lived in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United States, and has been trained previously as an engineer and an economist.

B. R. BONNER lives in Austin, Texas, where he took his degree in Geology at the University of Texas. He worked as a petroleum geologist for several years, then went to work in the computer industry after receiving an MBA. His short stories have appeared in *South Dakota Review*, *Matter Journal*, *The MacGuffin*, *Buenos Aires Literary Review*, *Existere—Journal of Arts and Literature*, *Chaminade Literary Review*, *Mind in Motion*, *Takahe*, and forthcoming in *Words and Images*.

JAY DUSARD has been photographing for over forty years, working in large-format black-and-white. His subjects are abstractions, landscape, and people. A 1981 Guggenheim Fellowship led to the publication of his acclaimed first book, *The North American Cowboy: A Portrait*. Several books of his photographs and writings have appeared over the years, as well as the documentary film *Jay Dusard: Keeping the West Western*. His monumental-size prints, some as large as 4x8 feet, are being exhibited throughout the United States. Please visit him at www.jaydusard.com.

CLINTON J. FRAKES was selected by former American poet laureate Mark Strand as one of the Best New Poets of 2008 for Meridian Press' anthology of the same title. He also received the 2008 Pudding House Poetry Prize. PoetWorks Press gave him the 2008 Josephine Darner Distinguished Poet Award and will publish his second collection of poetry in 2009, titled *Kaliyuga Blues*. His chapbook, *The Aching Unrest of Spheres*, is forthcoming, as well as another chapbook, *Unreal Cities* in St. Johns, Newfoundland. He is a graduate of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute and the Northern Arizona University writing program and received his Ph.D. with emphasis in creative writing

from the University of Hawaii in 2006. He has appeared in over 100 journals in North America, England, Australia and Argentina since 1987. His extensive interview with Allen Ginsberg, *Don't Fuck up Your Revolution*, is available through Elik Press. He is currently working on a volume of lyrical essays in Sedona, Arizona where he works as a freelance editor, ghost writer and wilderness guide.

JEREMY FREY has published in numerous journals and anthologies, and completed an MFA at the University of Arizona in 2006, focusing on poetry and creative nonfiction, where he now teaches Rhetoric and Composition. He has recently rediscovered acting in films, and uncovered a knack for editing memoir and poetry manuscripts. For additional work, check out the *Burnt Possum Poets*.

JENNY GUBERNICK is the student intern for this issue of you are here. She is a Creative Writing and English senior at the University of Arizona, and has published a poem and a story in *Persona*, the UA's undergraduate literary magazine. Her favorite border to cross is between the U.S. and Canada.

MARGARET KIMBALL is at this very moment pursuing a MFA in Visual Communications from the University of Arizona. In addition to this fine publication, she is art directing the forthcoming issue of the lovely *Sonora Review*. When she is not watching the ducks at the turtle pond, she can generally be found making books or reading them. Her work and thoughts can be found at www.margaretkimball.com.

BEN KIRKBY just earned a MFA from the University of Arizona in Visual Communications and is off in the real world, wherever that might be. In an earlier version of life, he was a photojournalist for the *Arizona Daily Star*, where many of his photographs have been published. In his free time, he likes to ride his bike in the mountains and plant tomatoes in his garden. He can be found at www.benkirkby.com.

KATHERYN KROTZER LABORDE is a writer of prose who lives in the New Orleans area. Her most recent publications focus on Katrina evacuation and the early days of recovery.

LARRY LINDAHL, an award-winning photographer, writer, and book designer, focuses on stories of the American Southwest, often featuring treks in the wilderness, and a personal connection to the land. His photography appears in calendars, magazines, books, and documentary films, art galleries, a traveling exhibit sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute, and at Grand Canyon National Park. He has covered stories in the Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, Canyon de Chelly, the Hopi Mesas, the Navajo Reservation, and Sedona, the town where he has made his home for the last 15 years. He has written several magazine stories and is author and photographer of *Secret Sedona: Sacred Moments in the Landscape*.

KATHRYN M. LUCHESE is a cultural geographer who works as a free-lance Lecturer, teaching primarily World Regional Geography at Texas A&M University, where she earned both her Masters and Doctorate degrees. Her advanced degree research involved studies of sacred place, meaning of place, and terrorism directed against cultural landmarks. With her husband Robert she recently spent a six-month sabbatical in Sendai, Japan; they have two nearly-grown children and live in College Station, TX with an elderly Corgi-mutt, Caleb. She hopes soon to devote full-time to writing not only more essays but a novel set in second-century Rome.

ELLEN MCMAHON was born in Boston in 1951 to a Freudian psychiatrist and an art historian. She received a B.S. in Biology from Southern Oregon State College in 1987, an M.S. in Scientific Illustration from the University of Arizona in 1983 and an M.F.A. in Visual Art from Vermont College in 1996. By a circuitous route that has included careers in Dance, Field Biology, Scientific Illustration and Design, she has arrived in her current position as an Associate Professor of Visual Communications in the School of Art at the University of Arizona. A member of the faculty since 1990, she teaches Design, Typography, Illustration and Design Theory.

SUZANNE ROBERTS is the author of three books of poetry, *Shameless* (2007), *Nothing to You* (2008), and *Plotting Temporality* (forthcoming from Red Hen Press). Her work has been published in *National Geographic Traveler*, *South American Explorers*, *Smartish Pace*, *Gulf Stream*,

Fourth River and elsewhere. She has been named "The Next Great Travel Writer" by National Geographic's Traveler magazine, and her current project, *Almost Somewhere*, is a collection comprised entirely of poems on place. She holds a doctorate in Literature and the Environment from the University of Nevada-Reno and teaches English, directs the Writers' Series, and edits the Kokanee literary journal at Lake Tahoe Community College. For more information, please visit her website at www.suzanneroberts.org.

RAFAEL ROUTSON grew up on a rural farm in the foothills of the Santa Maria Mountains outside of Prescott, Arizona. Living on the land fostered an intimate connection to family and place; cultivated a deep-rooted work ethic; and inspired a passion for the relationship between humans and the natural world. She has traveled and worked in the Southwest and around the globe to understand her place as a land steward, artist, scientist, and writer. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies from Prescott College, a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction from the University of Arizona, and pursues a doctorate at the UA in the School of Geography and Development. She has written several articles and two books, *A Heritage in Iron* and *A Ranching Legacy*.

SARAH ZIDONIK is a current fine arts graduate student at the University of Arizona. She received her BA in Art Education and her BFA in Fine Arts from the University of Florida in 2007. She grew up in Micanopy, Florida, a small town outside the college town of Gainesville. Her passions are volunteering in the community and making art. In Florida she volunteered with Arts in Medicine, a program that brought the arts to patients in the hospital. With *International Fine Arts and Healing*, a group from the University of Florida, Sarah traveled to The Gambia in March 2008 to volunteer. She currently volunteers at the University Medical Center in the Child Life Playroom in Tucson, Arizona, and also with the *Tucson Community Supported Agriculture*. Her volunteer work greatly influences her personal artwork.

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